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MAGAZINE

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DARK SECRETS OF THE EAS FOI 2019

Did hardened criminals stalk Britain's cities?

PLUS

A day in the life of a Victorian schoolchild



Britain's bored imperialists

Henry VI Nice guy, terrible king

Medieval

Empress Matilda's bloody fight for the **English throne**



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WELCOME



Anyone familiar with the works of Charles Dickens will have some concept of the **Victorian underworld** the seamy underside of 19th-century British cities, populated by a criminal class, enveloped in soot and grime. It was as familiar a picture then as it is to us today, but is this construction based on truth? In this month's cover feature, on page 20, Professor Heather Shore seeks out the inhabitants of the 'underworld' to see how far they accord with the legend.

Our Victorian theme continues on page 28 where we go **back to school in the 19th-century**. The curriculum, discipline and attendance are frequent subjects of debate today, but how did they differ 150 years ago? Susannah Wright and Ellie Cawthorne have the answers.

Of course, many Victorian Britons spent their lives far beyond these shores, administering the country's ever-expanding empire. In the popular imagination, imperial work represented an exciting opportunity for travel and adventure, but the reality could be rather more prosaic. On page 58 Jeffrey Auerbach explains how, for many Britons, the years spent in India, Australia and Africa were **monotonous in the extreme**. (The story was, of course, very different for those

Finally, some dates for your diaries. Our **History Weekend events in 2019** will be taking place in
Chester from 25 27 October and then Winchester
from 1 3 November. We'll be including more details in
subsequent issues and hope to see many of you there.

Rob Attar

living under British rule.)

Editor

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS



Catherine Hanley

Matilda should have become England's first queen regnant. She was an influential figure whose legacy stretched far beyond her own lifetime.

Catherine discusses her new book about the 12th-century claimant to the English throne on page 65



Lauren Johnson

Henry VI is an unfairly overlooked monarch. Without "the shadow on the wall", as one contemporary called him, there would be no Wars of the Roses and no Tudors. His reign was disastrous, but completely compelling.

• Lauren analyses the character flaws that scuppered Henry VI's reign **on page 34**



Jeffrey Auerbach

The Victorian empire was full of excitement, but it could also be dull and disappointing. Happily for me as a researcher, boredom turned out to be a fascinat ing topic, one that sheds new light on the imperial experience.

 Jeffrey describes the ennui that gripped British imperialists in the 19th century on page 58

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MARCH 2019

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43We explore the roots of Britain's current identity crisis



MARY EVANS/BRIDGEMAN/ALAM

ANNIVERSARIES

23 March 1801

Russia's tsar is brutally beaten to death

A plot to force the unpopular Paul I to abdicate results in his murder

atherine the Great was a hard act to follow. Even so, her son and heir Paul, who became tsar of Russia in 1796, made a pretty wretched fist of it. Having been separated from his mother as a boy, he had become obsessed with military minutiae and kicked off his regime by introducing Prussian-style uniforms, which proved deeply unpopular with his soldiers. His plans to force the nobility to subscribe to a new code of chivalry produced an angry reaction, while the total failure of his anti-French foreign policy made for a stark contrast with Catherine's canny diplomacy.

On the night of 23 March, matters came to a head. After a frosty dinner party, Paul had retired to bed in St Petersburg's Mikhaylovsky Palace. Meanwhile, a group of aristocratic officers, including the city's military governor Count Pahlen, were fortifying

themselves with champagne before the action to come. At last, they burst into the emperor's chambers, forcing their way past his valet and literally dragging Paul out in his nightcap.

Many accounts agree that the plotters initially planned to force Paul to abdicate, but alcohol soon took over. In the confusion, one officer hit the struggling Paul in the face with a golden snuffbox. The emperor went down, and a group of the plotters piled on top of him, kicking and choking him. One of them wrapped a sash around his neck and began to tighten. Then, when he had stopped twitching, they kicked and stamped on his body, until they were pulled away.

The next morning, when Paul's son Alexander, now emperor, reviewed the guards, they were wearing their old uniforms.



A portrait of Paul I of Russia from the 1790s. The son of Catherine the Great failed to live up to his mother's formidable reputation

1 March 1932

The 'Lindbergh baby' vanishes

The kidnapping of the famous aviator's son becomes the crime story of the century

n the evening of 1 March 1932, the pioneering aviator Charles Lindbergh was at home in New Jersey with his wife, Anne, and 20-month-old son, Charles Jr. At 7.30pm, a nanny laid the toddler down to sleep in his crib. About two hours later, Charles heard a noise he thought sounded like a crate smashing, but thought nothing of it.

Then at 10pm, the nanny, frantic with worry, reported that the baby had disappeared. In his bedroom, Charles found a handwritten, misspelled note: "Dear Sir! Have 50000\$ redy 25000\$ in 20\$ bills 15000\$ in 10\$ bills and 10000\$ in 5\$ bills ... We warn you for making anyding public or for notify the Police. The child is in gut care."

So began one of the most lurid cases in American criminal history. Amid massive publicity, crowds swiftly swarmed to the Lindbergh estate, destroying any chance of finding footprints. Amateur detectives, military men and even Chicago mobsters offered their assistance. More ransom notes arrived. In early April, Lindbergh delivered \$50,000 to the kidnapper via an intermediary. But there was no baby. Then, on 12 May, a truck driver found a child's body in woods near Lindbergh's home. It was little Charles.

Two years later, the police arrested a German-born carpenter, Bruno Richard Hauptmann, who had a record of robbery and whose garage contained notes from the ransom money. Protesting his innocence, he went to the electric chair. But many observers were convinced that he must have had help. And for the novelist Agatha Christie, the case inspired one of her greatest books, *Murder on the Orient Express*.

Dominic Sandbrook is a historian and broadcaster. He has presented numerous programmes on BBC TV and radio





The cover of an Italian magazine from 1932 shows the Lindbergh family and Charles Jr's empty cot. The tragic case of the baby's bungled kidnapping made headlines across the globe

25 March 1807

Twenty years after he began his crusade, William Wilberforce's (left) bill to **abolish the slave trade** is passed in the House of Commons.

13 March 1781

From his home in Bath, astronomer William Herschel **discovers the planet Uranus**.



1 March 86 BC

After a brutal campaign, the Roman general Lucius Cornelius Sulla **captures Athens** from the tyrant Aristion.



Giulio Piatti's depiction of the Sicilian Vespers, an uprising that took its name from the evening prayer service at which it began in Palermo, Sicily. The bloodshed that night led to a much longer campaign to overthrow the island's French rulers

30 March 1282

Sicilians revolt against their French oppressors

A sunset prayer service turns into a mass riot, kicking off 20 years of war

s the people of Sicily celebrated Easter in 1282, the mood was tense. For more than a decade, the island had been ruled by the French magnate Charles of Anjou, whose heavy taxes and Gallic hangers-on were much resented by the locals. After years of growing unrest, passions were running high; all that was needed was a spark.

It was on Easter Monday, just before the evening Vespers service at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Palermo, that the moment came. As crowds gathered outside the church for the annual festival, a group of swaggering, tipsy French officials, with a man called Drouet particularly prominent, made overtures to some young Sicilian women. In the

ensuing melee, one outraged husband plunged his knife into Drouet – and all hell broke loose.

"To the sound of the bells," wrote the great historian Steven Runciman, "messengers ran through the city calling on the men of Palermo to rise against the oppressor. At once the streets were filled with angry armed men, crying 'Death to the French'... They poured into the inns frequented by the French and the houses where they dwelt, sparing neither man, woman nor child." Whenever they found a suspected Frenchmen, the mob demanded that he pronounce the local word *ciciri*, which outsiders invariably found difficult. Anyone who failed the test was killed.

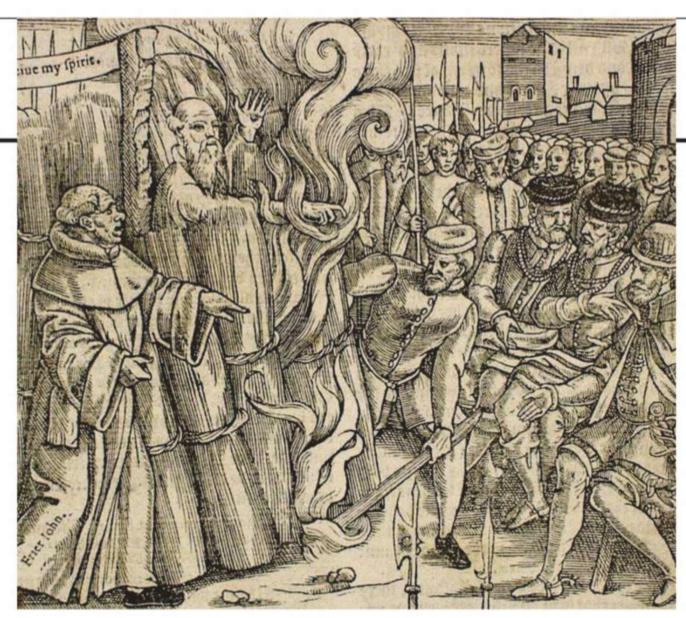
By the next morning, 2,000 people lay dead. The War of the Sicilian Vespers had begun; it would last for another 20 years.

Thomas Cranmer meets a fiery end

Mary Tudor has the architect of the English Reformation put to death

he death of Thomas Cranmer was one of the most dramatic in all English history. Under Henry VIII and Edward VI, Cranmer had been the driving force in the English Reformation, pushing through a revolution in the nation's religious and political life. But under the Catholic Mary I, his fortunes changed. In September 1553, he was arrested and sent to the Tower of London. Tried for treason and heresy, Cranmer was sentenced to death. With Mary determined to make an example of him, not even his increasingly frantic recantations could save him.

Cranmer's burning was scheduled for 21 March 1556, but Mary agreed that he could make a final recantation in Oxford's University Church beforehand. Cranmer duly mounted the pulpit, armed with the



A 1563 woodcut of Thomas Cranmer being burned at the stake from John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Mary Tudor was determined to make an example of the Protestant cleric

grovelling sermon he had agreed with his gaolers. But then, suddenly, he veered from the script. His earlier recantations, he said, had been "contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death, and to save my life". The hand that had written such words would soon be punished, "for if I may come to the fire, it shall be first burned. And as for the pope, I refuse him, as Christ's enemy and Antichrist, with all his false doctrine."

Dragged to the stake, Cranmer remained remarkably composed.
Cranmer had a "cheerful countenance and willing mind", reported one witness.
As promised, he put his hand into the fire first, saying loudly: "This hand hath offended." And even as the flames consumed his body, his calm and courage made a great impression on the crowds. In death, Protestantism's champion had won his greatest victory.

COMMENT / Diarmaid MacCulloch

"Cranmer's repudiation was a massive propaganda blow to the Catholic church"

Thomas Cranmer's burning has become such a focal point of England's Reformation that we miss its continent-wide significance. Cranmer was the most prominent 16th-century European to be burned at the stake for heresy; as archbishop of Canterbury he was primate of All England. Thus his renunciation of the Protestant faith was absolutely crucial to the Catholic cause.

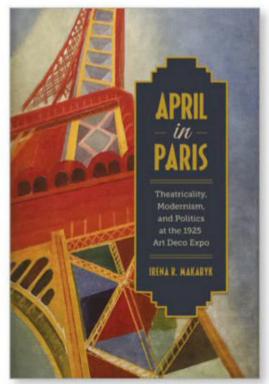
He was the chief living symbol of a national Reformation which was the largest that Europe had witnessed so far – just as Queen Mary's Catholic regime was the largest-scale attempt yet to roll back the frontiers of this religious revolution. Therefore, when Cranmer rejected the six recantations he had signed, dramatically repudiating them in front of hundreds of witnesses who were clutching printed copies of the text, it was a massive blow to the propaganda hopes of the old church, right up to the Holy Father in Rome. As far away as Hungary, his martyrdom was commemorated in verse and prose.

English Protestants were in disarray at the time, their cause associated with treason in the failed 1553 attempt to bypass Mary's royal succession in favour of Queen Jane Grey. Cranmer's calculated defiance in the flames hugely boosted their confidence and his story shaped centuries of English Protestant identity and anti-Catholicism.



Diarmaid MacCulloch is professor of the history of the church at the University of Oxford. He was knighted in 2012, and his books include *Thomas Cromwell: A Life* (2018), and the upcoming *Sex and the Church*

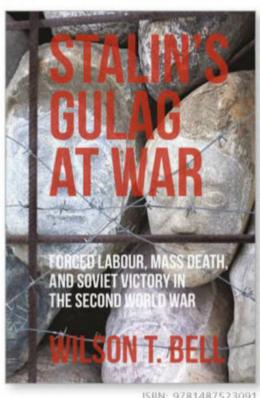
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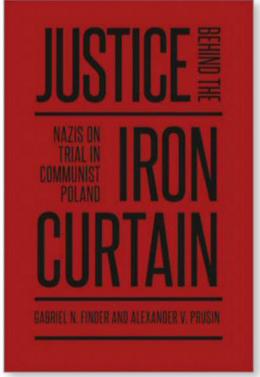
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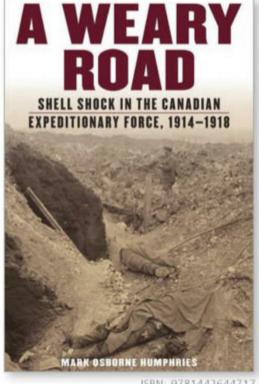
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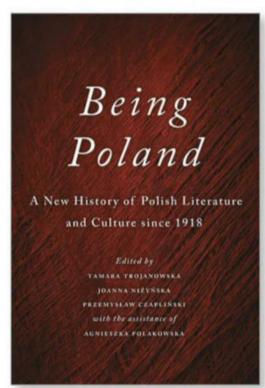
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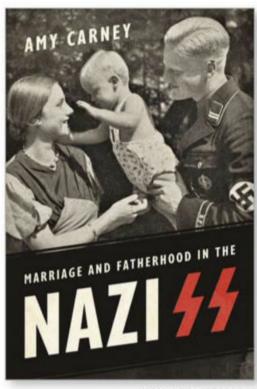
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TUDOR ROYALS

History now / News

"The figures on the headboard resemble early portraits of Henry VIÍ and Elizabeth of York"



The V&A, London recently hosted a conference on King Henry VII's marital bed. Jonathan Foyle

(above), whose research helped confirm the bed's royal heritage, tells the story of a remarkable piece of detective work



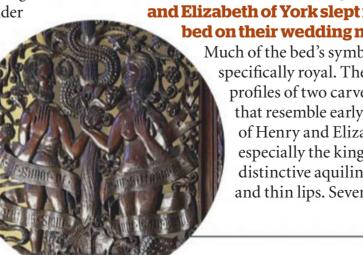
The bed was discovered in 2010 and its significance has become much more apparent since. It's a wonderful resource for understanding Henry's relationship with his wife, Elizabeth; it's the last of the medieval royal marriage beds, and the only one that survives. Investigations into the bed have been ongoing over the past nine years, and the conference gave analysts who've been studying it the opportunity to present their findings to press and public.

How did you first hear about the bed?

In 2012 I was contacted by antique bed specialist Ian Coulson who believed that a supposedly Victorian bed, bought at auction, was actually much older

- a Tudor royal bed to be precise. I was sceptical, but on examining the bed in 2013, I saw the timbers

When interpreted as Christ and the Virgin, the carved figures represent salvation and the triumph over evil





to be cut and joined in an authentically medieval style. I was intrigued.

What did scientific analysis reveal?

DNA analysis, and dendrochronology (dating tree rings to the year they were formed), determined the wood to be oak from central Europe – this is known to have been imported by medieval kings, including Edward III, and *definitely* pre-Victorian.

Final confirmation of the bed's medieval origins came from paint analysis. This went beneath the Victorian varnish to reveal the bed's chronology of decorative finishes. The earliest sample matched that of 15th-century interiors, something impossible to fake.

How do we know that Henry VII and Elizabeth of York slept in this bed on their wedding night?

> Much of the bed's symbolism is specifically royal. There are profiles of two carved figures that resemble early portraits of Henry and Elizabeth especially the king's distinctive aquiline nose and thin lips. Seven carved

stars also represent the seven gifts, or virtues, said to have been conferred to English kings by the Holy Ghost at the point of anointing. And the bed's heraldry consists of single roses, which were devices used by both Henry and Elizabeth.

The bed's shape also fits against the centre of the 13th-century mural in the Painted Chamber in Westminster Palace. This is where Henry and Elizabeth spent their wedding night (on 18 January 1486) and for which a "marriage bed" was prepared.

What do the carvings on the bed's headboard represent?

They show salvation through the lens of a 15th-century royal marriage. The two figures on the headboard that resemble Henry and Elizabeth actually depict Adam and Eve holding the apple of temptation. These figures also represent Christ and the Virgin Mary, who transform the apple into a sign of redemption. The pair are trampling a lion and dragon, which represent evil.

Dr Jonathan Foyle is an architectural historian and broadcaster. He'll be discussing the bed on our podcast soon: historyextra.com/podcasts



A good month for... WELSH HISTORY

A statue of Betty Campbell, Wales's first black headteacher, is to be placed in the plaza of Central Square in Cardiff. Betty, who was told as a child that she would never achieve her dream of becoming head of a school, topped a recent public vote to find Wales's hidden heroines.

FACIAL HAIR

A historian from the University of Exeter has found evidence that some 19th-century women tried to grow, or emulate, facial hair. Dr Alun Withey discovered advertisements for grooming products such as Tricosian Fluid, for women who wanted to change the colour of their whiskers or eyebrows.

A bad month for...



STONE CIRCLES

A stone circle in Aberdeenshire, previously thought to have been built 3,500–4,500 years ago, has been found to be a modern replica, built in the 1990s.

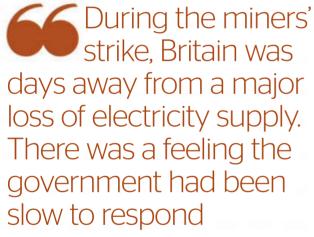


The historians' view...

How should Britain prepare for emergencies?

As the government makes plans to cope with difficulties that might arise from a no-deal Brexit, two experts reflect on how previous administrations have sought to respond to everything from floods to nuclear attacks

Compiled by **Chris Bowlby**, a BBC journalist specialising in history



DR CATHERINE HADDON

the British government had a military flavour, focused on the possibility of nuclear attack during the Cold War. But from the 1970s on, a system of planning for civil emergencies emerged. This was prompted in particular by the miners' strike of 1972, when government assessments described how "industrial action could have the most serious and immediate effect on the life of the nation or threaten the health and safety of the community".

Britain had been days away from a major loss of electricity supply, which would have brought much of modern life to a standstill, and there was a widespread feeling that the government and the civil service had been slow to respond. Instead of large, unwieldy emergency committees, resources were poured into a new, more streamlined Civil Contingencies Committee. The new system was called into action during terrorist incidents like the Iranian embassy siege in London in 1980, and terror attacks remain prominent in contingency planning today.

The end of the Cold War and broader optimism about global and national developments meant less attention was paid in the 1990s to government provision for emergency action. However, as the new century began, a series of unforeseen crises boosted emergency planning as a political priority, while reviving criticisms about the government being 'unable to respond' at times of acute public need.

First came the so-called 'fuel protests' in September 2000, when refineries were blockaded by drivers demonstrating against high fuel taxes – again raising the prospect, as in the 1970s, of the country grinding to a halt. The government was taken by surprise at how swiftly the protests and their effects spread. The crisis became acute because of the threat to human life in hospitals that were running out of fuel, and expanded across many sectors as supermarkets ran out of supplies and schools closed.

This was followed, in October and November 2000, by major flooding – the kind of extreme weather event that has since become a regular concern. Hard on the heels of that, from February to October 2001, came the foot-and-mouth outbreak, for which the government had to co-ordinate extensive emergency measures to contain the disease, including the mass slaughter and incineration of animals and tight control of the movement of people.

In 2004, parliament passed the Civil

In 2004, parliament passed the Civil Contingencies Act, which attempted to improve procedures for emergency government and establish smoother co-ordination with other agencies and the emergency services. The government has also had to learn to deal with other developments in modern society, such as the growth of new information sources and social media, which means that details about emergency situations often spread faster among the population than inside government offices.

Politicians sense, too, that public scrutiny of their actions has ramped up, especially during crisis situations. The penalty for being seen to fail to cope during emergencies has steadily grown. Planning for emergencies, then, has moved gradually from association with only the most extreme circumstances – in particular, nuclear attack

 to a more regular test of political competence.



Dr Catherine Haddon is the resident historian at the Institute for Government

BBC History Magazine







JOSHUA MCMULLAN

n the Cold War era, the idea of emergency planning by the government was associated above all with the threat of Soviet nuclear attack. But there was constant debate inside Whitehall and among the public about whether the retreat of the government into regional underground bunkers was appropriate, and whether any kind of emergency response could match the devastation that would occur.

In 1980 a BBC Panorama episode, 'If the Bomb Drops', took apart the government's civil defence strategy. It was considered a 'good result', for instance, if only 30 per cent of the UK population died in the event of nuclear war. The episode followed a scenario run at what was known as a 'sub-regional government' in a Humberside County

Council bunker outside Hull. Essentially, everyone was caught by surprise - some of the public servants jumped when the alarm rang.

As the scenario progressed, it became clear that the 'controller' in charge was ruthless – advocating use of force against an unruly civilian population and the death penalty without due process for those caught committing a crime. Humberside was considered to be a 'well-prepared' authority. Regions such as North Wales, by contrast, did not have a bunker to hold a regional government. But even well-prepared bunkers would have been of little use, since it was projected that government might completely collapse after an attack, only existing at a 'street or parish' level.

There was sharp criticism from groups like the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) when the government released information pamphlets such as 'Protect and Survive' in the late 70s and early 80s. They were meant to show people how they could prepare for a nuclear attack. But it was ludicrous, said the critics, to suggest people could survive nuclear war simply by lying flat on the ground or building a shelter in their homes out of tables, doors and stuffed bin bags. CND used the opportunity to oppose nuclear weapons, publishing the counter-pamphlet 'Protest and Survive'. They weren't alone in their scepticism: Leeds and Hull councils produced their own



Police detain a man at the Iranian embassy siege in 1980, an incident that saw the Civil **Contingencies Committee called into action**



Pigs and cows are dumped into an incinerator in Northumberland during the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, February 2001

leaflets mocking the government's version.

Whitehall didn't really believe it could show itself able to cope with such an overwhelming situation. Instead, it doubled down on its policy of mutually assured destruction. Why spend billions on nuclear shelters, ran the argument, when you could ensure your safety through the development of nuclear weapons, making the threat of a strike too risky for the enemy?

Yet planning for nuclear emergencies was not confined to military situations. The accident at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in 1986 showed the devastation that could be caused by radiation spreading from a nuclear power station many hundreds of miles away. That helped push the idea of the government making plans not only for events in the UK, but also for environmental disasters taking place abroad but

directly affecting Britain and its people.



Joshua McMullan is researching a PhD at the University of Leicester

DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

British Nuclear Culture: Official and Unofficial Narratives in the Long Twentieth Century by Jonathan Hogg (Bloomsbury Academic, 2016)

PAST NOTES

VEGANISM IN BRITAIN

OLD NEWS

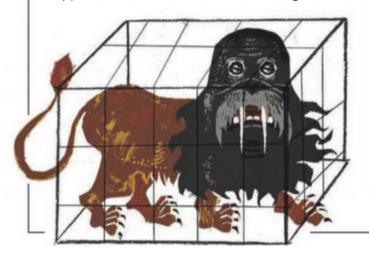
The walrus at the zoological gardens

Dundee Advertiser 12 November 1867

hat was it like when the first animals were displayed at London Zoo? Although the collection of creatures had existed for centuries, it was during the reign of Queen Victoria that London Zoo opened its doors to the public for the first time. And under the guidance of the zoo's superintendent, renowned taxidermist and zoologist Abraham Dee Bartlett, the menagerie began to grow.

Heralded with great national excitement, a "most distinguished visitor" arrived on board a whaling ship in 1867. 'Jemmy' was an eight-monthold Walrus, brought back by Captain Wells of the steam whaler Arctic for Mr Bartlett's burgeoning collection. It was "a beast with whose general appearance most are familiar, by means of stuffed specimens or drawings, but which has been seen alive by few except Arctic travellers", reported the zoologist Frank Buckland, who went on: "When displeased he can roar famously. His voice is like that of a lion, only... not so loud. It is to be hoped that Jemmy will thrive and do well, and long form an object of study to the naturalist, and amusement to the thousands of our countrymen who must, of course, hasten to pay their respects to this new and most interesting visitor."

Story sourced from britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk and rediscovered by **Fern Riddell**. Fern regularly appears on BBC Radio 3's *Free Thinking*





Joachim Beuckelaer's 16th-century oil on canvas The Vegetable Seller

Soysage roll, anyone? **Julian Humphrys** looks at the distant origins and modern rise of British veganism

When was veganism born?

The choice to avoid animal products for spiritual or ethical reasons has a long history. For many years, vegetarians in Europe were known as 'Pythagoreans' after the Greek philosopher whose followers refused to eat slaughtered meat. Vegetarian societies in Britain date from the 19th century: the first was launched in 1809 by the interestingly named William Cowherd. But the first organisation for those seeking a lifestyle totally free from animal products the Vegan Society – was founded in November 1944 in London by a small group led by Donald Watson.

Watson was a Yorkshire-born woodwork teacher, conscientious objector and teetotaller living in Leicester. He had stopped eating meat at 14 after seeing a pig being slaughtered on his uncle's farm, and gave up dairy in his early thirties as he believed cows were exploited in the milk production process.

Why the name 'vegan'?

JONES

ILLUSTRATION BY BEN

Watson and his friends wanted a name for their movement. As 'non-dairy vegetarians' seemed a bit of a mouthful, it was agreed that something shorter was needed. 'Vitans', 'dairybans', 'benevores' and 'allvegans' were considered before they settled on 'vegans'. They are said to have created the name by taking the beginning and the end of the word 'vegetarian', but may also have been influenced by the fact that one of London's foremost vegetarian restaurants was called the Vega.

What happened to Watson?

He later moved to Cumbria, where he guided hikers and grew crops in his garden, avoiding animal manure and digging with a fork instead of a spade to minimise the risk to earthworms. Watson, who also refused to take medicines because of their links to animal testing, always argued that his long life was evidence of the benefits of his lifestyle. He died in 2005 aged 95.

How many vegans are there in the UK?

The numbers are rising, but despite recent publicity it's still a small minority. Research carried out by the Vegan Society in 2018 suggested that around one person in a hundred was a committed vegan.

BRIDGEMAN



Michael Wood on... historical films

"Does it matter that film-makers play fast and loose with the facts?"

There's a scene at the end of the old John Wayne–James Stewart western *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* in which we discover the hero's whole reputation was built on a fiction. But the newspaper editor responds: "This is the West, sir – when the legend becomes fact, print the legend!" This story came to mind recently as I was reading the debate about historical accuracy in *The Favourite* and *Mary Queen of Scots*. Does it matter that film-makers play fast and loose with history and just make up the facts? After all, Shakespeare did it – and his Richard III is the one we all know today.

The Guardian's Simon Jenkins, for instance, thinks film-makers have an obligation when dealing with history to get the basic facts right. Historian Greg Jenner, on the other hand, offers a different take. He thinks we all know that these are "just stories", and it is up to historians to give us the real facts. Meanwhile these films promote wider public interest in history.

I agree with Greg. But I still have a question. Sometimes the impact of a film can transcend the mere facts of history and, like Shakespeare, end up creating its own legend. We might ask how long it is until poor Queen Anne's reputation escapes *The Favourite* – but does the real responsibility for film-makers come when addressing recent events? Does the bar get higher then?

A spate of recent films raise the same issues, and suggest there is more of an obligation when handling current events, such as Iraq or Brexit, where it is vital the public are well informed about the history. This is especially true in our era of fake news – what one might call the first rough draft of fake history.

Take *Vice*, a scathing polemic on Bush and the Iraq War. Here, historians and journalists agree that whatever the disastrous chain of events that led to the invasion of 2003, the film-makers' idea that Dick Cheney engineered the war for his oil friends owes more to *Mad* magazine and *Dr Strangelove* than to history.

Then there's 2017's cluster of Second World War

films: *Darkest Hour*, *Churchill* and *Dunkirk*. All are laced with questionable fictions. When Gary Oldman's Churchill takes the tube and talks to ordinary folk, well, the jaw drops.

Churchill, of course, famously said: "I will leave judgments on this matter to history – but I will be one of the historians." His six-volume *The Second World War* was got out fast, with a team of researchers plus the advantage of all the military and diplomatic papers on his desk. It helped create the image of Churchill as our saviour in the war, the greatest Briton – a powerful emotional matrix still active now in our current debates, which are surely as much about national and English identity as the European Union.

Churchill, of course, was writing with his own spin, not just to cement his place at the centre of the narrative of the war, but with the bigger message that the "English-speaking peoples" had a unique historical destiny. That was a message for the times, written just as Britain was losing its empire and adjusting to its new status as a former world power. And looking at our own day, films on Churchill, Dunkirk and the Few do the same thing: they hit the zeitgeist in an almost Jungian way. Though planned long before the referendum of 2016, they are part of a long-term mood of national introspection in postwar, post-empire and post-industrial Britain.

So, sure, let's not mistake movies for history. The goal of film-makers is to use history in a creative way. The triangle of Queen Anne, Sarah Churchill and Abigail Hill is fantastic fun, and based on real relationships, but as director Yorgos Lanthimos tells us at the start, it is not history. On crucial current topics, however, it is important that we understand what really went on. And that is where the historians come in – whether in schools and universities, or in the media.

And as for films like *Darkest Hour* or *Vice*, they will be fascinating sources for historians of the future – but about the time they were made, not about the time they depict. For they are really about us.

Michael Wood

is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC series, and his books include *The Story of England* (Viking, 2010)

BBC



GETTY IMAGES

LETTERS

The fallout from Versailles

In the January edition you asked for opinions on Professor David Reynolds' stimulating article on the Treaty of Versailles (*Did the Versailles Peace Trigger Another War?*). In 1998, did anybody anticipate the financial crisis of 2007–08, the worst to afflict the world economy since the Wall Street Crash of 1929? In which case, is it reasonable to expect the peacemakers in 1919–20 to have had any inkling of that crash occurring? This perhaps even applies to Keynes himself, critical as he was of reparations and "the economic consequences of the peace".

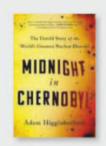
No doubt historians will continue the debate about other fundamental post-Versailles factors: the weaknesses in the constitution of the Weimar Republic; the controversial economic actions taken by

Bruning as chancellor between
March 1930 and his departure
in May 1932; to say nothing of the
intrigues of von Papen, von Schleicher and
others, which led to the appointment of
Hitler as chancellor on 30 January 1933.

I wonder what historians in 2029 might have to say about the outcome of Brexit, in whatever form it might take, in the light of unforeseen political and economic developments in the meantime.

Brian Smith, Norwich

• We reward the Letter of the Month writer with our book of the month. In this issue that is Midnight in Chernobyl by Adam Higginbotham. Read the review on page 69



taken direct control of a major part of the world, extended its domination and imposed its ideology. America would not have been able to intervene without Britain as a base, even if it had wanted to.

The Nazis would have imposed their system and theory of eugenics on the countries they controlled. What's more, the murder of Jews and all other human beings they considered to be inferior would have been even greater. While the greatness of Nelson Mandela is without doubt, the abolition of apartheid was also effected by world pressure, which would have been limited if Germany had been dominating the world.

If, on the other hand, the Soviet Union had defeated Germany without support, without the presence of the Allies in Europe, it would have imposed its system of repression on the whole of Europe and beyond.

Donald Tomkinson, Crewe

A European mishmash?

In his support for continued UK membership of the European Union, Alan Gidney (*Letters*, February) conveniently ignores the fact that the British people never consented to our membership of a political union. In 1975 we agreed to remain in the Common Market, which was sold to the electorate as a trading bloc, only to discover that we had been conned by the then political elite into cementing ourselves into what amounted to a United States of Europe — a political mishmash that is doomed to sink under the weight of its own unelected bureaucracy.

Hugh Rogers, Ashby

Lincoln's motives

I was amused by Lucy Worsley's response to the letter written by Richard Samuels about Abraham Lincoln's motives (*Letters*, Christmas). I would remind her that, without President Lincoln's efforts, slavery would have continued in the southern part of the US, and the country would have been split in two. Lincoln's motives may not meet Lucy Worsley's standards, but he did accomplish great things.

Ralph Kerr, Florida

Why Churchill is my icon

Nelson Mandela has been voted the most important political figure in the BBC Two *Icons* series, but I believe that this should have been Winston Churchill. Disregarding any other of his acts – good or bad – one act alone determined the future of civilisation. Without his leadership, it is almost certain that Britain would have made a treaty with Germany, which would have been on unfavourable terms.

Hitler's domination of Europe would have been complete and it is possible, or probable, that Russia would have been defeated without the aid from Britain and America. Germany would have



Lucy Worsley's feature on Lincoln (November) has proved controversial with many readers

Divine-right Donald?

I have just read the 'Letter of the Month' (January) and, for the first time, I am moved to send you a comment. The writer correctly points out that northern America *does* have centuries of history – the First Nation peoples were there way before colonial invasion from Europe.

Where I disagree in particular is with his statement that: "In England it wasn't until 1689 that the king or queen could no longer change laws, borrow or tax without parliament's approval." I could set out the fundamental flaws in this but what really annoyed me was that this was written with Mr Trump in the White House, a man whose first choice is to act by executive order and who has the power to close down federal spending at the drop of a hat. To an outsider (admittedly with no direct experience of this president), it looks more like divine-right monarchy than "imperfect democracy", as the correspondent put it.

In England we removed control by any single person. A majority in parliament confers power, nothing else.

Jane Grenfell, Somerset

My Vietnam war

I write regarding the interview with Max Hastings in the December issue



An American helicopter hovers above troops during the Vietnam War. Reader, and veteran of the war, Alan Allen disagrees with Max Hastings' take on the conflict

(Max Hastings on Vietnam). As a Vietnam veteran, I spent nine months in the country in the US army infantry. I've also read many books and articles on the war. Hastings' take on it is the worst I've read.

Our efforts became "doomed" because we ran out of support back home and President Johnson caved. We succeeded so well during Tet that a major North Vietnamese general admitted to it in his memoirs, saying we dealt them a devastating blow.

The Viet Cong were good soldiers, but the North Vietnamese troops (NVA) I killed were not. Neither were better than GIs, but the Cong knew their territory well, and thus had the advantage. The NVA did not know the territory; after Johnson stopped bombing the North (due to pressure from liberals at home), NVA flooded the South – so they entered new areas.

I grew up hunting in east Texas, so I was comfortable in the woods of the Central Highlands, as were quite a few of my fellow GIs. The AK-47 is better than the original M-16s, but once we got chromed bolts and began keeping our rifles clean we had few problems with M-16. (I carried a 12-gauge shotgun)

Draftees in Vietnam were good soldiers; as in Korea and the Second rifles clean we had few problems with the M-16. (I carried a 12-gauge shotgun).

World War. Most didn't "...feel miserable about risking our lives", as Hastings claims. Our CO, who did three tours in Vietnam, said our company, nearly all draftees, was the best fighting group he commanded.

Alan Allen, US 545 08 37 198th Light Inf Bgde (1967-68), Texas

Corrections

- As a number of readers have spotted, we inadvertently added the territory of the Czech Republic to Poland in the map on page 89 of February's issue (My Favourite Place: Warsaw). Apologies for this error.
- On page 54 of January's issue (The Forgotten Battle of Britain) we showed an image of Hurricane pilots "during the Battle of Britain". However, as a few readers have pointed out, the photograph was taken before the battle and perhaps as early as 1937.

WRITE TO US

We welcome your letters, while reserving the right to edit them. We may publish your letters on our website. Please include a daytime phone number and, if emailing, a postal address (not for publication). Letters should be no longer than 250 words.

email: letters@historyextra.com

Post: Letters, BBC History Magazine, Immediate Media Company Bristol Ltd, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN

SOCIAL MEDIA



What you've been saying on Twitter and Facebook

Following the success of period films and series such as The Favourite and Call the Midwife, which event or period from history would you like to see dramatised next?

@hisdoryan I'm always surprised about the lack of dramas about Bess of Hardwick considering the potential there (strong female roles aplenty, scandal, plots etc).

@ruthjoyceart Isabella of France, the so-called She-Wolf of France, and wife of Edward II - her story involving Roger Mortimer, Edward II and Edward III.

@MattLewisAuthor The Wars of the Roses. Given a long-term, deep and accurate treatment, it would be like Game of Thrones on steroids.

@KateWilliamsme Josephine and Napoleon!

@simplyjaye Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine and their 'devil's brood'. It's a period of history that had everything.

@rivers_allison5 As long as it's not the Tudors, I'd be interested! Eleanor of Aquitaine, Queen Matilda and Kathryn Swynford were fascinating women.

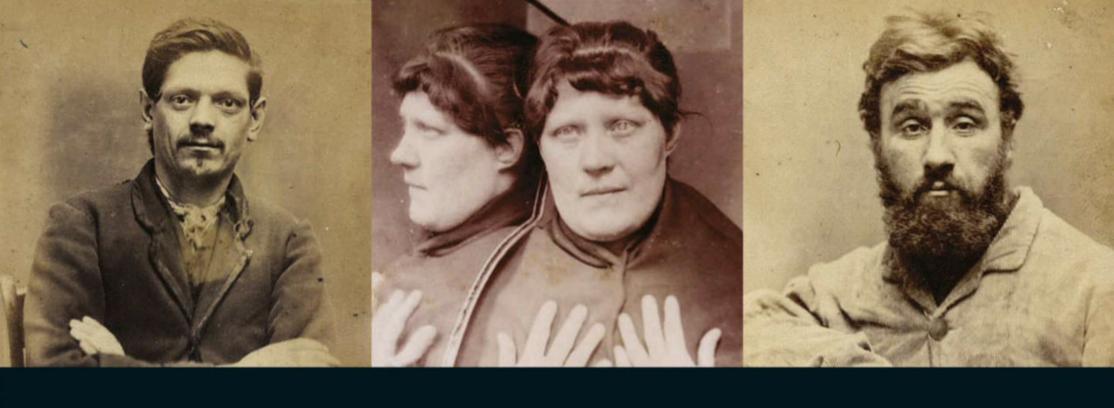
@politicdormouse The Rebecca Riots in south-west Wales. Men dressing up as women ('the daughters of Rebecca'), farmers smashing toll road gates in a grassroots protest against the treatment of the poor by the rich.

@johnnyP_NCFC The barbaric transportation of petty thieves and Irish nationalists to Australia, van Diemen's Land and especially Norfolk Island is an unbelievably rich subject for dramatisation.

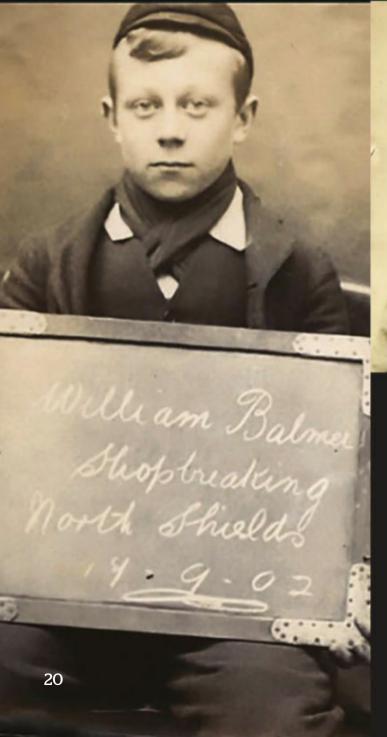
@hollerella After watching the BBC Icons segment on Helen Keller, definitely more about her. She was one inspiring lady.

@HikingHistorian I always thought the Mitfords would be perfect for a series. Such interesting sisters.

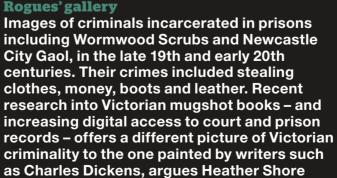
@Lady_B_Crawford The Russian Revolution - it had such profound effects for much of the 20th century and yet there's very little out there on it in terms of dramatisations.



The real faces of Victorian under

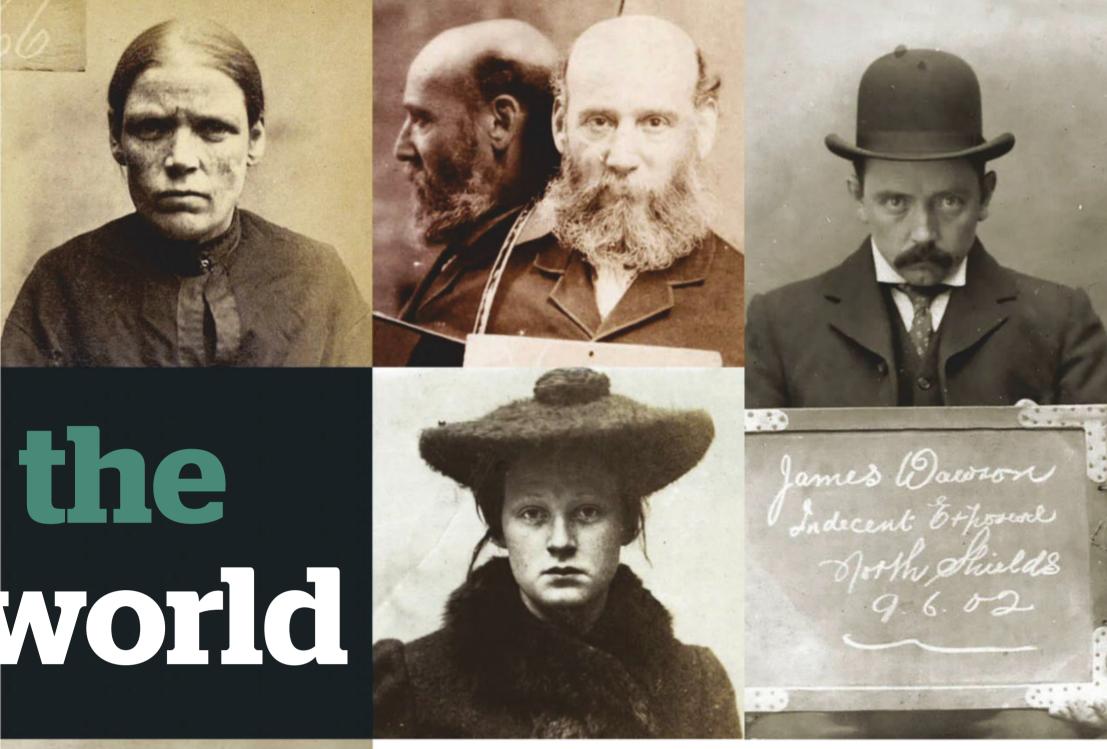


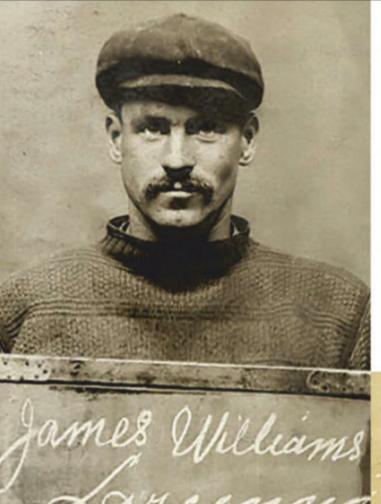












BBC History Magazine

In the eyes of many Victorians, Britain's great metropolises had a dark side – and it was one in which burglars, swindlers, pickpockets and safe-crackers ran riot. But did the stereotype of the 'criminal underclass' tally with the truth?

Heather Shore investigates



The Victorian underworld

ondon's great
underworld to many
may be an undiscovered country," wrote
the police-court
missionary Thomas
Holmes in 1912.
"Twenty-five years of
my life have been spent amongst its inhabitants, and their lives and circumstances have
been my deep concern. Sad and weary many
of those years have been, but always full of

absorbing interest."

Thomas Holmes had spent decades working among London's urban poor, and he clearly regarded them as objects of pity. But for Holmes – and many other Victorian commentators – to visit London's 'underworld' was to take a journey into a parallel universe, distinct from the one occupied by the normal, law-abiding population. This "undiscovered country" or "great underworld", as Holmes called it, was the realm of the professional criminal, where burglars and swindlers plied their trade and pickpockets held sway. This was certainly not a place to which most respectable Victorians dared venture.

The Victorians were far from the first to survey Britain's criminal underworld, to describe the underbelly of the metropolitan poor. Long before Thomas Holmes immersed himself in some of London's most deprived districts, pamphlets and broadsides had offered unsuspecting visitors advice on how to avoid the capital's "idle and disorderly persons", "sturdy beggars" and "notorious street-robbers". The first half of the 19th century saw an explosion in literature dedicated to exploring street-life and poverty, and this literature abounded with references to the dives, sinks and dens apparently inhabited by hardened criminals.

It may have been the influence of a translation of Dante's Divine Comedy, by the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1867, that led to contemporaries drawing parallels between the underbelly of Victorian society and Dante's journey through hell into the underworld. Certainly, within a year or so of Longfellow's translation, the term 'underworld' was increasingly being used to refer to the poorest districts of global cities such as Paris, Calcutta and Tokyo. In Britain, in growing urban centres like Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow and London, it would become a familiar way of describing the criminal worlds that were believed to exist in parallel with the upper-world.

Journalists, novelists and social missionaries made little attempt to differentiate between poverty and crime, and they often

assumed criminality based solely on the way people dressed, the areas in which they lived and the condition of their homes. The result was that overcrowded houses of London's poor were routinely branded as 'nurseries of crime'.

And when members of the Victorian commentariat described the underworld, they often had specific districts in mind – places like Saffron Hill and Field Lane (home to Fagin's 'den' in the fictional *Oliver Twist*), Whitechapel and the St Giles slum. Unsurprisingly, these were areas often associated with manufacturing and industrial development, high levels of population mobility, overcrowding, sub-standard housing and a proliferation of lodging-houses.

A company of thieves

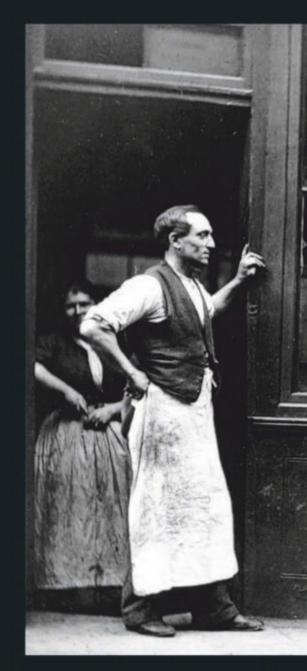
Social investigation (as it is collectively known) from this period, published as books and articles, frequently took the form of 'journeys' into an unknown and dangerous London, providing glimpses into a world that was fundamentally alien to middle and upper-class readers.

In this respect, Charles Dickens' journalism had a significant impact. In 'On Duty With Inspector Field' (1851), Dickens described an expedition into a thieves' den in St Giles, just south of modern-day New Oxford Street – a journey that he undertook in the safekeeping of the Metropolitan Police detective Charles Field. "Saint Giles's church strikes half-past ten," Dickens wrote of his encounter with the den. "We stoop low, and creep down a precipitous flight of steps into a dark close cellar. There is a fire. There is a long deal table. There are benches. The cellar is full of company, chiefly very young men in various conditions of dirt and raggedness. Some are eating supper. There are no girls or women present. Welcome to Rats' Castle, gentlemen, and to this company of noted thieves!"

The subterranean environment of the thieves' den, Rats' Castle, would help shape

Journalists often went on 'journeys' into an unknown and dangerous London,

providing glimpses of a world that was alien to their readers









Crime and poverty

LEFT: A London soup kitchen in the 1870s. This image – one of the first examples of a photograph being employed as social commentary – was used in the 1877 book *Street Life in London*ABOVE: The bullion box and lead shot used in the Great Gold Robbery of 1855, when more than £12,000 of gold was stolen from a train travelling from London Bridge station

BELOW: Italian organ-grinders in a slum property in Saffron Hill in 1881. The poverty-stricken occupants of this area had long loomed large in Victorian commentators' descriptions of the 'underworld'



Criminal sensations of the Victorian era

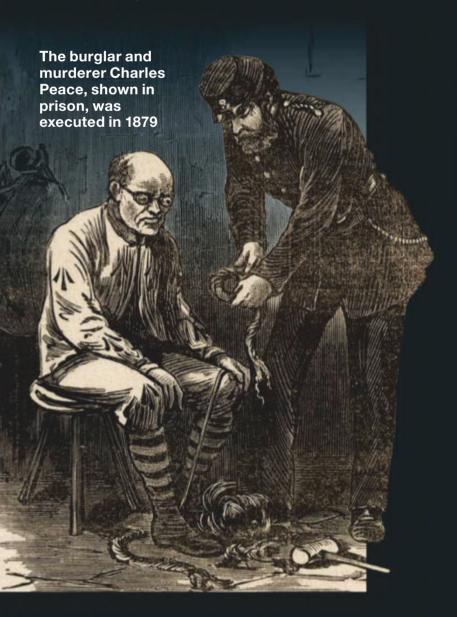
Fears that Britain's great cities were blighted by rampant lawlessness were stoked by high-profile villains

The one-man crimewave **V**

Charles Frederick Peace (1832–79) was a Sheffield burglar whose escapades included the fatal shooting of a policeman in Manchester (two local villains were arrested for the crime: one was convicted and sentenced to death), the shooting of an acquaintance in 1876, and a series of burglaries in London.

Peace's one-man crimewave made him one of the most infamous offenders of the century. "It certainly is marvellous to find how many London people know about Peace," declared the *Illustrated Police News* in 1878. "Never before has any country scamp jumped so suddenly and completely into metropolitan conversation."

Peace was arrested in Blackheath during a burglary and tried at the Old Bailey. On being taken to Sheffield to be tried for murder, he attempted escape by jumping from the train. He was executed at Armley Gaol in 1879.



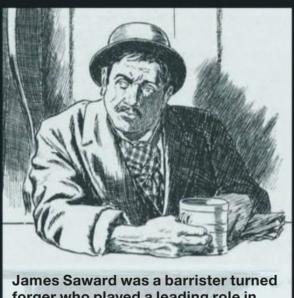
The press sensation

Ikey Solomon (c1787–1850) was a London-based thief and receiver of stolen goods. His first brush with celebrity came when he escaped from custody in 1827. He went on the run, making his way to Van Diemen's Land to where his wife Ann had been transported. Solomon was the subject of a legal battle that ended with his being shipped back to England to stand trial in 1830 in a case that made him a press sensation. He is often cited as the model for Charles Dickens' Fagin. However, this has been largely discredited.



◄ The inveterate forger

James Townsend Saward (born 1799) – also known as 'Jim the Penman' – was a barrister who played a key role in the Great Gold Robbery of 1855. Saward's signature crime was forgery; he specialised in signing blank cheques which he bought from pickpockets and thieves. He also copied signatures on used cheques. He was caught when banks became suspicious about his activities and he made a series of mistakes that resulted in the arrest of his accomplices. He was sentenced to be transported to Australia in March 1857.



James Saward was a barrister turned forger who played a leading role in the Great Gold Robbery of 1855

A criminal of ill-repute 🕨

William Sheen (c1800–51) was a notorious offender who lived on the borders of Whitechapel and Spitalfields in the early 19th century. He originally came to the attention of the authorities when he was prosecuted, but later acquitted, for the murder of his baby son in 1827. He was imprisoned in Clerkenwell Gaol in 1837 when he was found running a house of ill-repute, where "the boys were encouraged in picking pockets and the wretched girls were made victims of the greatest depravity".

iminal career cenwell Gaol,

William Sheen's criminal career landed him in Clerkenwell Gaol, shown in a c1830 painting

the metaphorical imagining of the underworld and can be detected in much of the writing of this period. On 22 October 1869, the *Pall Mall Gazette* reported the case of Ann Gilligan, who was summoned to the Thames Police Court for permitting thieves to assemble in her house. "It was proved that her house was a notorious thieves' den, that she lived with a well-known thief, and that she herself had been frequently convicted," the paper recorded.

As such reports reveal, the image of the hardened, professional thief now loomed larger than ever in descriptions of the underworld. According to this view, the thief – also labelled the sneak-thief, the burglar, the swindler and the safe-cracker – was the product of a distinct 'criminal class'. And this criminal class was every bit as alien to respectable Victorians as the 'criminal underworld' that it inhabited; it existed with its own customs, its own language, and specific areas in which it operated.

The exotic criminal

Over the second half of the 19th century, accounts of the 'criminal class' would describe a new breed of offender in its ranks, hailing from overseas. "Herds of criminal foreigners... have settled in certain districts of London," lamented *Reynolds' Newspaper* in 1898, "which they have succeeded in transforming into an Alsatia where every form of vice and blackguardism flourishes."

Scare stories involving foreign criminals were inspired by old-fashioned xenophobia and concerns about the periodic waves of immigration that had brought new communities into some parts of London and other British cities. But fears of an exotic new threat to law and order were also triggered by the growth of modern technologies like the railway and ever more complex financial instruments. These resulted in a wave of crimes involving everything from safe-cracking and bullion robberies from banks, large houses and trains to financial swindles and frauds. One of the most noteworthy of these crimes was the Great Gold Robbery of 1855, in which £12,000 was stolen from a train bound from London to Boulogne in France. In the popular imagination, the perpetrators of such crimes were often seen to have international connections, involving criminals with foreign-sounding names.

By the 1860s, the fear of rampant criminality – whether committed by home-grown or foreign miscreants – had become so pervasive that it had begun to shape the criminal justice system. In 1869, the government passed the Habitual Criminals Act, which stated that any offender on a ticket-of-leave (an early parole



Poor children outside a shop in the Victorian period, when journalists and authors often conflated poverty and criminality

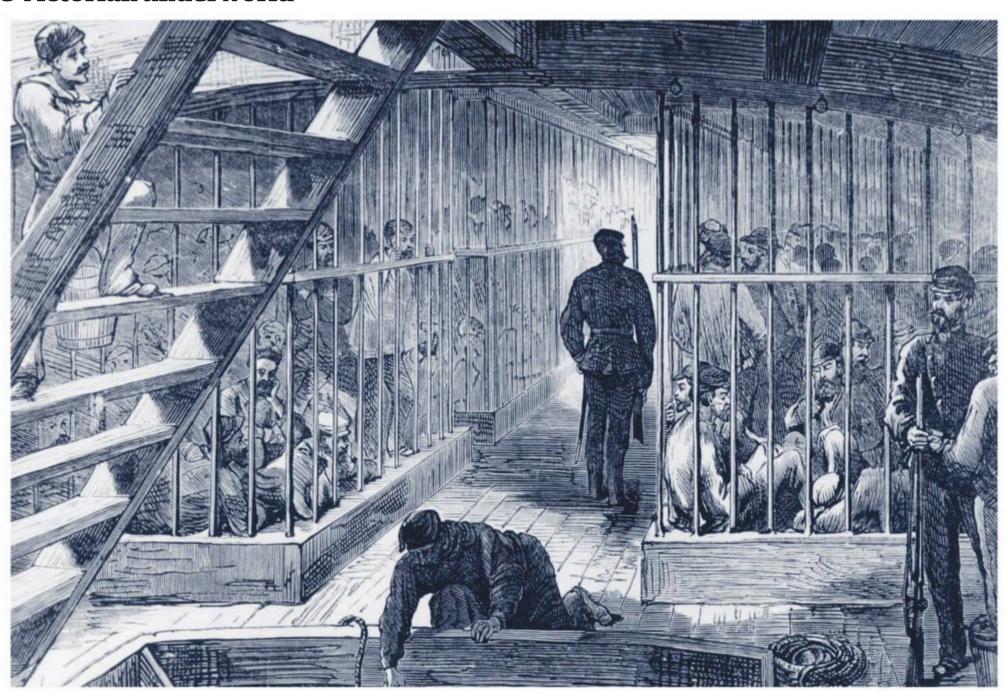
In popular perception, the criminal class had its own customs,

its own language, and specific areas in which it operated system) could be summoned before a magistrate, and, if they could not prove that they were making an honest living, they could be sent back to prison. While the act was in part a response to the decline of convict transportation to Australia, it was also influenced by the desire for increasing surveillance of potential criminals and poor communities.

The real underworld

In truth, however, there is little similarity between the mythologised criminal underworld and the individual stories of criminal activity that we can now discover from mugshot books and from our increasing digital access to court and prison records, and to newspapers. These indicate that the underworld that so fascinated and appalled polite society was not a domain dominated by professional, hardened criminals but one blighted by petty crimes and random disorder – committed by people for whom crushing poverty and lack of opportunity was often a way of life.

In fact, if we're searching for the real face of the so-called Victorian underworld, then we should perhaps look to the likes of Lydia



A 19th-century depiction of prisoners on their way to Botany Bay. The decline of transportation sharpened people's fears of lawlessness

Most crimes weren't committed by professional criminals but by people afflicted by crushing poverty and

lack of opportunity

Lloyd, whose story can be found at the Digital Panopticon website. Lloyd was first prosecuted for using obscene language in public when she was aged around 16 in 1858. She faced multiple convictions over the following years – for theft, being drunk and disorderly, and receiving stolen goods. Her life was characterised by a cycle of offending, in and out of the courtroom and the prison.

Many of the convicted criminals in the Victorian mugshots available to us today in archives and museums lived lives far more redolent of Lydia Lloyd than Charles Dickens' master criminal Fagin. That was certainly the case for 18-year-old Mary Bailey, who in 1840 was indicted for pinching a woman's purse in a butcher's shop. The Old Bailey's records tell us that Bailey denied all knowledge of her crime and cited her eight-week-old child in her defence. That wasn't enough to prevent her from being transported for 10 years.

A similar fate awaited Elizabeth Jones, a "nurse girl" from St Pancras, who in 1842 was convicted of stealing a shawl, a bonnet and some money from her employer. Jones was just 15 years old when she went before the judge for her crimes, but her youthfulness wasn't enough to elicit pity from him. According to the Digital Panopticon website, Jones was sentenced to seven years' transpor-

tation to Australia, where she lived out her life, dying at the age of 77.

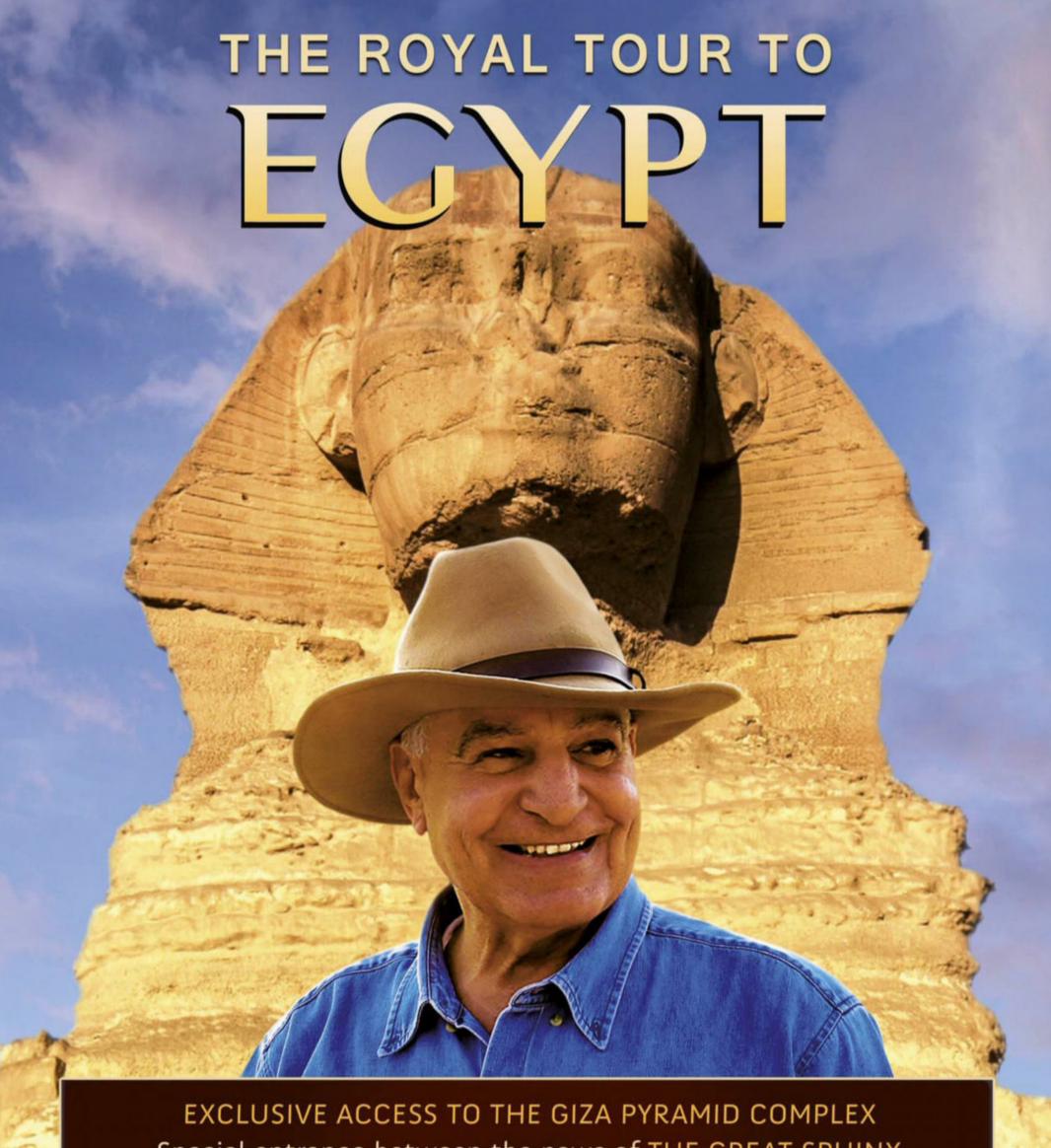
The Victorian underworld is hard to pin down. As the examples on page 24 prove, repeat offenders undoubtedly existed but they were far from the norm. The rich seam of literature and journalism that described the seedy, criminal underbelly of the city, lurking alongside respectable society, was just that – a literary construction. And it spoke to the growing fears about urban society and social change in the Victorian era.

Heather Shore is professor in history at Leeds Beckett University. She is the author of *London's* Criminal Underworlds, c. 1720 to c. 1930: A Social & Cultural History (2015) and co-investigator on the project: https://ourcriminalancestors.org

DISCOVER MORE

WEBSITES

- ➤ You can find more on the lives of **Victorian convicts** including Ikey Solomon and Lydia Lloyd at *digitalpanopticon.org*
- ► Go to *oldbaileyonline.org* for more **details of the trials** mentioned in this feature
- ► Read more about **the Victorians** at BBC History Magazine's website: historyextra.com/period/victorian



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CLASS WARFARE

Victorian schools could be ideological battlegrounds, where harassed teachers did their best against a backdrop of grinding poverty. **Ellie Cawthorne** and **Susannah Wright** study an era's education

Complements the BBC Radio 4 series The Secret History of a School



he 4th of May 1899 was not a good day for the headteacher of St Mark's School in Leicester. Less than two weeks into her job, she recorded in her school logbook an incident that had begun with the caning of a boy for lying and disobedience. Revolting against his punishment, the boy had started "flinging himself about", before kicking her and even threatening her with "a clasp knife open in his hand". To make matters worse, the child's mother had arrived at the school to castigate the headteacher in "abusive and threatening language" before demanding that magistrates investigate the school's conduct.

While incidents like this led to lengthy logbook entries, most school days in Victorian Britain were not so dramatic. But daily life in the elementary school classroom was often a battleground between idealistic educationalists, governmental interlopers, struggling parents and hard-pressed teachers. Not to mention the children.

Over the course of the 19th century, a

patchwork of school systems operated across the country, and the experience of learning in one classroom could be very different from the next. Those who could afford the small fee might attend local parish or church schools. Another alternative, for those willing to embrace a more informal approach to education, were privately run 'dame schools' that operated out of local teachers' homes.

From 1833 onwards, child labourers were supposed to receive schooling from their employers under the Factory Act, while those found homeless or begging might be sent to tough industrial schools to learn a trade. Another option for those unable to fund their own education was schools established by charitable organisations. Most notable w the so-called 'ragged schools', formed in 1844 to offer free education to Britain's poorest children. By the 1870s, there were around 350 such institutions across the country, which (in the words of Charles Dickens) "stretch[ed] out a hand" to those children "too ragged, wretched, filthy and forlorn to enter any other place".

For many of these children, just making it





Pupils at Carlton School, London, c1890s. Classes would be loosely organised by ability, rather than age, in a system known as 'standards'

Teachers recorded concerns about "poor, ill-nourished and shoeless" children **arriving** already exhausted after a long shift at work





Ralph Hedley's 1887 illustration shows a boy whose parents can't afford to pay for school

to school each morning was an achievement in itself. "I generally find the same parents frequently keep their children away from school on the most trivial and frivolous excuses," stated the headmaster of Willow Street School, Leicester, in 1883. However, for many poor families, truancy was far from 'frivolous' – it was an economic necessity. A child attending school often meant the household losing an income. Records show that girls were more likely to miss school than their brothers – in families that couldn't cope, they would be the first to be hauled back home to help out.

Truancy levels also rocketed when seasonal work was available. Birmingham's Floodgate Street School recorded a rise in absences over the Christmas period, when several students were found hawking "Xmas novelties" on the streets rather than in the classroom.

Not having winter boots to walk to school in was another often-cited reason for absence. By 1880, however, the Elementary Education Act had made school attendance compulsory, meaning that specially appointed officers could slap parents with fines and even threaten them with prosecution. As such, attendance and punctuality became central components of 'good behaviour' – in 1892, the pupils of Floodgate Street who weren't out peddling festive wares were rewarded for their good attendance with a trip to see the whale skeleton at Curzon Hall.

Those who did make it to the school gates

Each morning began with "prayers and singing", followed by "catechism with analysis". Afternoons included "writing on slates" and arithmetic

each morning were not necessarily ready to learn. Many children were on the 'half-time system', which allowed them to fit schooling in alongside work. This relentless schedule undoubtedly took its toll on young learners — teachers frequently recorded concerns about children arriving already exhausted after a long shift at work. Humanist FJ Gould (the self-described "most restless teacher in London") recalled the boys at his school in Limehouse turning up "poor, ill-nourished and frequently shoeless".

National pride

Bells marking the beginning of the school day rang at different times across Britain. With evening and weekend sessions employed to fit in alongside working hours, there was no universal starting time.

At Hampton Industrial School in Middlesex in 1862, students arrived from 9am, ready for lessons in scripture to begin at 9.15am sharp. At the National Society's Central Boys' School in London, the school day started when the "doors shut at nine o'clock". According to an 1845 timetable, each morning there began with "prayers and singing", swiftly followed by "catechism with analysis and scripture proofs".

Religion was a key element of every school day. Expectations of biblical knowledge were high – unattainably so, critics thought. FJ Gould bemoaned having to interrogate "half-starved" children on complex theological questions, while Dickens criticised ragged schools for "presenting too many religious mysteries and difficulties to minds not sufficiently prepared for their reception".

Religious wellbeing was not the only moral instruction children were expected to take away from their lessons. As fears spread that urbanisation and industrialisation were breaking down the social bonds of Britain's communities, schools were seen as a way to re-civilise the next generation, teaching them lessons of cleanliness and discipline that they could carry back to their homes. 'Readers' intended to aid literacy contained patriotic and imperialistic messages. One of the books found most frequently in elementary classrooms was HO Arnold-Forster's *The Citizen Reader*. First published in 1885, it



Cookery class at Marlborough Road School. Girls could often be kept at home by struggling families when money was tight



When Charles Dickens visited Field Lane Ragged School, he found "the close low chamber, in which the boys were crowded, so foul and stifling as to be almost insupportable"

A ragged school dinner in London, c1901. Food was donated by charities or even by teachers themselves

extolled to children "the duties owed by British citizens to their country, their countrymen and themselves", warning that those "who really love their country, and are truly proud of its great history, will be particularly careful not to do anything by which it may be dishonoured".

The classrooms in which these lessons took place varied as much as the schools themselves. In the early 19th-century, many schools were run on a monitorial system – in which all children were massed in one large hall, to be taught in small groups by older pupils. By the middle of the century, classrooms as we might recognise them had begun to emerge. Classes of up to 40 pupils were not uncommon, and sizes could stretch to 80 during staff shortages. As there were no set ages for entering and leaving the education system, classes would be organised according to ability, rather than age, in a system known as 'standards'. If possible, girls and boys would be separated (gendered entrances were a common architectural feature in purposebuilt schools), but resources often simply didn't extend far enough.

When it came to health and safety, many classrooms would not have won over Ofsted. Inspectors commented on overcrowding, poor heating and a lack of ventilation. In 1843, Charles Dickens visited Field Lane Ragged School in Clerkenwell, and found "two or three miserable rooms upstairs in a miserable house... The close low chamber, in

which the boys were crowded, was so foul and stifling as to be, at first, almost insupportable." What Dickens saw that day left such an impression on him that he wrote an appeal in *The Daily News* for better school funding.

Community centres

By 12pm, pupils at the Central Boys' School and Hampton Industrial School were ready for lunch. With schools generally placed in the centre of communities, pupils would usually be given a long lunch break (up to two hours) in order to head home for food. Although free lunches were not provided on a national scale until the early 20th century, food would sometimes be donated by charitable organisations, or even teachers themselves. This demonstrated the important welfare role that a school could play in a poor community. Social reformer Charles Booth declared that "each school stands up from its playground like a church in God's acre ringing its bell".

When the girls of Hampton Industrial School returned to the classroom after their lunch break, a monotonous afternoon stretched out ahead of them – devoted entirely to needlework. Vocational subjects were mainstays of industrial schools. These would often be divided according to gender – while girls studied sewing and later cooking, boys might be offered commercially orientated drawing, or woodwork.

At the National Society's Central Boys'

School, afternoon lessons resumed at 2pm, and had a more academic bent, including "reading miscellaneous books", "writing on slates", and "arithmetic from blackboard". Alongside religious studies, the 'three Rs' were the backbone of most school programmes.

While idealistic reformers preached the benefits of literacy and numeracy for personal development, other theories were swirling beneath the desire to educate the next generation. From the mid-19th century, much of the discussion around elementary schooling focused not on opportunities for children, but on Britain's industrial capacity.

Commentators fretted that European competitors were gaining the upper hand, and one way of countering the threat was to produce a better-skilled workforce. In 1870, industrialist WE Forster introduced the Education Act in parliament by declaring: "Upon the speedy provision of elementary education depends our industrial prosperity." The act extended funding for school building and aimed to guarantee school places for all children aged between five and thirteen.

All of these lofty governmental ambitions had a direct impact on life in the classroom. From 1862, government grants were offered for each child who passed an inspection in reading, writing and arithmetic. In this 'payment by results' system, schools could receive an extra eight shillings per child who passed – a financial reward that had a direct impact on teacher salaries. Critics accused the



new system of fostering a frenzied culture of exam obsession, as well as overemphasising the three Rs. Parliament debated the 'overpressure controversy', and medics were called in to assess the physical and mental state of overstretched pupils. Writing to *The* Schoolmaster newspaper in 1880, FJ Gould admitted: "When one of my backward boys died of bronchitis a few weeks back I felt a measure of relief, for his death would make one failure the less."

He later reflected: "The test was applied to all children alike – clever, average or crass. Hence the teachers worried, bullied, caned and 'kept in' after school hours. Scholars and teachers were miserable. To the souls of millions of children, this system brought a slavery as grim as the bodily slavery introduced by the industrial revolution of the 18th century."

One method of raising classroom standards was to enforce stricter discipline. The stereotype of corporal punishment in the Victorian school is all too familiar. Take the hypocritical schoolmaster Mr Brocklehurst in Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre, advocating his teachers to "punish her [Jane's] body to save her soul", or Nicholas Nickleby's sadistic Mr Squeers, who relentlessly persecutes the boys under his charge before receiving a highly cathartic comeuppance. Yet while physical punishment of children was both legal and widely accepted at home and even in the street, these literary depictions of schools terrorised by merciless cane-wielding masters were not universally accurate. In fact, overuse

Depictions of canewielding masters terrorising pupils are not wholly accurate

of corporal punishment was seen as a sign of failing to maintain classroom control. One headmaster in 1887 wrote that a staff member who was over-zealous with the cane had "great obstacles to overcome in class", and from the 1890s, it became standard practice to record all punishments in a book, to be checked by inspectors. Teachers noted that the most effective forms of punishment were often non-physical, especially those that involved an element of 'naming and shaming' whether that meant a child wearing a dunce's hat or a sign around their neck.

Fascination and boredom

By the 1890s, reforms to the restrictive 'payment by results' system meant that those wishing to broaden the minds of their young charges could increasingly afford to venture into subjects such as geography, science and history. Much like today, whether these lessons would inspire fascination or boredom was largely down to the teacher. While inspectors criticised a master at Slater Street School in Leicester for delivering lessons "taken from the syllabus with little lively instruction", others like FJ Gould attempted

to inspire their pupils with storytelling and excursions to museums and galleries.

Lessons at the Central Boys' School reached an end at 4.45pm. After more prayers and singing, books and slates were collected and the boys sent on their way. By the time they left the public school system for good, pupils aged 12 (the minimum leaving age from 1899) and above were expected to reach the 'fourth level' - requiring them to write dictated phrases with fewer than three spelling mistakes, read with fluency and expression, recite eight lines of poetry and answer maths problems.

For many children, however, it was not the academic lessons that stayed with them the most. As Arthur Goffin, a typesetter's son born in 1879, recalled: "We were taught direction and guidance, and acquired soundness, contentment, control and stability... [Our teacher] had always something beyond the textbook for us, and drove his lessons home by unforgettable anecdotes and stories... I can recall so many things [my teachers] said which I realised in later life have helped me in different ways."

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Henry VI Nice guy, terrible king

Henry VI was merciful and generous. But what English kings required most during the Wars of the Roses was a core of steel – and Henry's lack of one would make him easy prey for his foes. **Lauren Johnson** tells the story of a monarch who was simply too soft to lead his troubled nation



n the morning of
22 May 1455, King
Henry VI heard the tolling
of the bells of St Albans in
the shade of his battle
standard, surrounded by
armed followers. For the
first time, at the age of 33, he was about to
experience battle – against his own subjects.

Yet Henry was no bellicose tyrant. He was devoted to peace, and even now, with a Yorkist army at the gates, led by his greatest enemies, he was so confident that matters could be resolved peacefully that he and his bodyguard failed to don armour. But as the bells fell silent, the distant sounds of violence shattered the king's complacency.

The Yorkists had abandoned negotiations with Henry's commanders and forced an entry through the gardens on the edge of the city. Henry's refuge in St Albans marketplace was suddenly overrun with enemy soldiers, arrows whistling through the air, his attendants clustering around the horrified king as they faced an opposing army unarmoured. The result was inevitable. Henry's escort was slaughtered, defensive wounds to the face and arms attesting to their inferior preparations. The king was wounded in the neck and dragged into a tanner's cottage to save him from the hail of arrows. Within half an hour the town, and Henry, were in Yorkist hands.

The battle of St Albans was a contest for control of the king – and, as such, is widely regarded as the opening clash of the Wars of the Roses. The result was that England collapsed into a state of civil war – between supporters of Henry's Lancastrian dynasty and his Yorkist rivals – from which it would not recover for 30 years.

By the time he was killed in 1471, Henry had the distinction of having lost two kingdoms - one of them twice

Henry VI's reign is rightly remembered as a nadir in English history and 1455 signalled the beginning of the end. But defeat at St Albans was not the first calamity to assail the king. Between 1450 and 1453, Henry had lost the majority of his continental kingdom, as it tumbled to a resurgent French army. By 1453 the English had been expelled from every corner of the realm but Calais. That collapse inspired rebellion in England. Within six months, four of Henry's chief advisers had been butchered by his vengeful subjects. Even worse, these events prompted the arrival on the domestic scene of a man capable of rallying the growing opposition to Henry: the king's distant cousin Richard, Duke of York.

In his struggle to retain control of at least one kingdom, and to reject rival Yorkist aspirations for government, Henry exhausted himself physically and mentally. In 1453 he collapsed into a profound mental breakdown from which he had only just recovered when his forces were routed at St Albans.

In 1461, six years after St Albans, Henry's Lancastrians suffered an even more damaging defeat, at the battle of Towton. Here, in the Yorkshire snow, 28,000 men were slaughtered in what is the bloodiest battle in English military history.

Even that was not the end of Henry's troubles. He was twice deposed by Edward IV, son of the Duke of York, so that by the time Henry died at the age of 49 in 1471 he had the unfortunate distinction of having lost two kingdoms – one of them twice. He had also lost his only child, Edward, in battle, and his liberty to the Tower of London. He was murdered there, on Edward IV's command, on the night of 21 May 1471. One source claimed that, by the end, he had retreated into mystical visions and hallucinations, perhaps once again suffering from the mental ill health that had troubled him for two decades.

Son of a war hero

How had it come to this? Henry VI had seemed to be in a formidable position when he inherited the 'dual monarchy' of France and England in 1422. His father was Henry V, the victor of Agincourt, whose right to the French throne had been confirmed in the Treaty of Troyes in 1420, which it was hoped would end the long war between England and France. The Lancastrian dynasty was replete with capable, experienced statesmen, chief among them Henry V's brothers John, Duke of Bedford and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. Henry VI had every advantage then, except his youth. For when Henry V died – having never met his only child – Henry VI was only nine months old.

The example of previous child kings was disheartening: Henry III (who inherited his throne at nine in 1216) had faced prolonged civil war with his own barons; Edward III (who acceded, aged 14, in 1327) had endured a faction-ridden infancy as his mother and her lover controlled the kingdom; Richard II (king at 10 in 1377) had been deposed by

TIMELINE Henry's disastrous reign

1422

his behalf.

Before his first birthday, **Henry VI inherits the thrones** of England and France. His uncles rule on

The infant Henry presides over the 'Parliament of Bats' as warring factions struggle for supremacy, members of each side hiding wooden bats in their clothing.

1426

1440

To celebrate attaining his adult rule, **Henry founds Eton College**. The following year he establishes King's College, Cambridge.

1445

Hoping for a peace treaty to end the Hundred Years' War, **Henry marries Margaret of Anjou**, a French princess (below).



Henry's uncle the Duke of Gloucester (above) is arrested for treason and dies in royal custody. Rumours persist that he was killed by Henry's leading councillors.

1450

Most of France is lost. Cade's Revolt seizes London. Four of Henry's councillors are murdered and the Duke of York returns from Ireland to assert his right to lead the government.

TTY IMAGES/ BBIDGEMAN/ALA

Henry VI is crowned king of France in Paris in 1431, a move that provoked the French



An illustration showing the English army's disastrous defeat by the French at the battle of Formigny, April 1450. England's military collapse in Normandy triggered a major rebellion back home and seriously undermined Henry VI's authority

1453

Henry suffers a mental breakdown so profound he cannot recognise, nor respond, to his family. The 'sickness' lasts 17 months, during which time Henry's only child is

born. York serves as

Protector.

At St Albans, York and his supporters attack Henry. A number of Henry's attendants are killed and he is injured, possibly again falling ill. York seizes control of government.

Richard, Duke of York became the most powerful man in **England in 1455**

1455

1456

To undermine York's authority, Queen **Margaret removes Henry and the Lancastrian court** to Coventry.

1461

York's son Edward IV deposes Henry VI. After Edward's victory at the bloody battle of Towton in Yorkshire, **Henry** and his family are

forced into exile.

Edward IV threw his great rival Henry VI in the Tower and ordered his murder

1465 1471

Henry is captured by Edward's supporters and imprisoned in the Tower of London.

secures Henry's restoration, the Lancastrian regime is again toppled. Henry's son is killed in battle. Margaret and Henry are imprisoned. At Edward's command, **Henry is murdered** in the Tower.

After Margaret briefly

GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN





Henry VI with Margaret of Anjou. The English king may not have possessed an iron will but his wife certainly did, leading the resistance when Henry was deposed by Edward IV in 1461

Henry VI's Lancastrian forebears. However, when Henry V died, the English political system rallied around their baby king, his uncles Bedford and Gloucester stepping in to rule the dual monarchy with the help of a royal council until Henry VI was old enough to do so himself.

Henry's minority is remembered as a period of relative calm, but it only appears so because his later years were so turbulent. In fact, the root of many of Henry's troubles can be found in his childhood. His uncles were ambitious men who blighted Henry's youth with their sometimes violent disputes. Time and again Henry was called upon, despite his youth and inexperience, to resolve their quarrels, expected to serve as final arbiter of complex, adult dynamics that had taken form before he was born. As he was a sensitive, serious child, it is little wonder that he shrank from conflict in later life.

Worse, the war in France had not ended with the deaths of Henry V and the French king Charles VI, both in 1422. Henry VI's right to rule there was now violently contested by his maternal uncle, Charles VII, requiring constant supplies of men and money be churned from an already denuded English treasury. In an attempt to undermine

As a sensitive child surrounded by warring advisers, it is little wonder that **Henry shrank from** conflict in later life

Charles's claims, in 1431 (at the grand old age of 10) Henry VI was crowned king in Paris, the only time he ever visited his French patrimony. His coronation proved a costly error, committing the English to further campaigns and nudging Henry towards real rule before he was ready for it.

A lack of foresight

On his return to England in 1432, Henry first agitated for control of government (or was persuaded to do so by his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, who had more to gain by dominating the young king than he did by accepting continued shared rule with his rival kinsman). But despite having been crowned in both England and France, Henry's attempts were rebuffed by his councillors, who told him he had not yet developed the necessary "foresight and discretion" for independent rule. The accusation that he lacked discretion undermined Henry's confidence. To avoid censure he cultivated the habit of delegating power to others and in the years ahead Henry was dominated by one leading adviser after another: first Gloucester, then William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, who became something of a father figure to Henry. Most famously, Henry was influenced by his wife, Margaret of Anjou, the French princess whom he married in 1445 in hopes of securing an Anglo-French peace and a much-needed heir to the throne.

Because of his need for a firm guiding hand to transform his vacillating will into action, Henry has been accused of lacking a policy of his own. But Henry's guiding principle is clear: he sought peace, sometimes to the detriment of domestic security. For the first decade of his adult rule, his efforts were clearly directed towards achieving a treaty with France so that he could unite Europe and with France so that he could unite Europe and pacify the factions then dividing the Catholic church. To the cause of peace, he sacrificed his popular uncle Gloucester, who was ostracised

by Henry's willingness to compromise with France. Despite Gloucester's noisy protests, Henry defied his father's will and liberated the Duke of Orléans, a French prince who had been imprisoned in England since 1415.

Henry was content, too, to hand the English-held territory of Maine back to French control on his marriage to Queen Margaret. In 1447, with Henry's acquiescence, Gloucester was arrested on charges of treason. He died in royal custody, leaving Henry's regime open to accusations of murder. (Gloucester's ex-wife, Eleanor Cobham, had already been arrested and condemned to lifelong imprisonment for treasonably colluding with necromancers and witches to supplant Henry.)

Blind faith in the French

Despite these experiences, Henry retained a child-like faith in the good of his fellow man. He believed Charles VII's devotion to peace was as earnest as his own, a trust that his English councillors knew was woefully misplaced. As his errors in judgment multiplied and his reputation for open-handed liberality at court spread, Henry's own subjects accused him of political folly, even of mental illness: in 1446 a London draper claimed Henry was "not steadfast of wit as other kings have been before".

But the fault lay in Henry's minority, not in madness. He had learnt the lessons of kingship from books. He knew that kings must take counsel, reward their attendants, behave lavishly and seek peace. But, having never seen a real ruler at work, he did not realise that these ideals had to be tempered with realpolitik. Royal willpower was the vital lubricant of successful government machinery, but Henry appeared to offer patronage whenever asked, and without discretion, with dire financial repercussions for a cashstrapped nation at war. His preference for peace could be mistaken for cowardice. What a medieval king needed above all else was a core of steel, and Henry never developed one.

If Henry's marriage to Margaret of Anjou had quickly produced children to restock the dwindling Lancastrian dynasty, Henry might have led an army to France as his father had done. But until 1453, Henry's heir was either his uncle Gloucester or Richard, Duke of York. Henry could fully trust neither – especially York, who was tainted with the rebellion that devastated Henry's regime in 1450.

When a son was finally born to Henry in October 1453, he arrived at the worst possible moment, during the king's mental collapse. Royal recognition of the prince was impossible, making it all too easy for Yorkists to insinuate his illegitimacy. Henry's mental breakdown from 1453–54 thus undermined

Just how saintly was Henry?

Was the tragic monarch truly above worldly sin?

A child dragged from the Thames half-drowned; a girl impaled on a pitchfork; a prisoner rescued by angels; an epileptic nun. These were among 300 people who reported being miraculously preserved by King Henry VI (pictured below) after his death. Their stories were painstakingly recorded by the monks of Windsor as proof of the late king's sanctity.

The cult of 'Saint Henry' took off within years of his murder: embarrassingly for the Yorkist Edward IV, his namesake northern city was among its earliest proponents in the 1470s. Henry's suffering during deposition, and violent death, made him seem a sympathetic intercessor to his former subjects. During life he had been famously pious and generous, concerned for education and, according to a papal collector who visited England in 1437, "more religious than a man of religion".

But was Henry really the holy innocent he was cracked up to be? Many of our ideas about this 'Second Job' come from his confessor and biographer, John Blacman, who wrote when Henry's cult was in full force. Blacman was determined to present the king as a latter-day saint, claiming that Henry only wore farmer's boots and black clothes, that he lived chastely, and that he despised "vain sports and pursuits" like plays and hunting.

In truth, however, Henry had recognised the importance of dressing

magnificently, once meeting French ambassadors in a tapestry-bedecked chamber, wearing a floor-length gold-embroidered crimson gown. He also showed a worldly concern for his potential wife's appearance, insisting that three possible foreign brides should be painted in "their kirtles simple" – that is, half-dressed, so he could determine which one he fancied best (in the end, none of them).

And while he never took a mistress, Henry wasn't celibate, producing an heir with Queen Margaret: Edward of Lancaster. There is also ample evidence that, although Henry avoided human bloodshed, he enjoyed hunting, and the occasional play.



a regime already susceptible to criticism.

One of Henry's subjects blamed witchcraft for the royal illness, while modern authors have suggested schizophrenia inherited from Henry's maternal grandfather, Charles VI. Neither theory is satisfactory. Given the trauma and strain of Henry's reign, a complex interplay of stresses and serious depression seem likelier culprits. In any case, the reason for Henry's illness was less important than its effect: in 1454 the Duke of York was named Protector, hardening the divisions of Henry's court so that a 'Yorkist' faction rivalled the 'Lancastrian'. Henry's recovery in 1455 only exacerbated the feud, for his clumsy attempts to restore Lancastrian courtiers to power incited Yorkist violence.

The battle of St Albans was the result, confirming Lancastrian suspicion of York and hindering Henry's recovery. In the last six years before his deposition in 1461 Henry retreated further into political irrelevance, the Lancastrian cause increasingly commanded by Queen Margaret, who would continue to lead the resistance after the royal family was

usurped by the Yorkists in 1461. Henry's only real effort to assert himself – the 'Love Day' of 1458 that attempted to reconcile the warring parties with a public procession – was a farcical failure.

The challenges Henry VI faced as an infant king of two realms were unique and, as incidents like the 'Love Day' debacle prove, the chief reason that Henry failed to overcome them was that he was himself far from exceptional. Merciful, charitable, loyal and generous to a fault, there is much to admire in Henry as a man. But, as a king it is impossible to consider him anything but a failure.

Lauren Johnson's latest book, *Shadow King: The Life and Death of Henry VI*, is published in March by Head of Zeus

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The Invention of Britain

Your new radio series aims to bust some myths about British history. Which of these stood out for you?

The most important is to do with England's relationship with the other parts of the British Isles. So for example, when I was at school, more than 40 years ago now, I was taught about the 'English Civil War', which was essentially presented as a dispute between royalists, who tended towards the divine right of kings, and the more earthy parliamentarians trying to assert the constitutional rights of Englishmen. Since then, most serious historians have revised the title to be the 'Wars of the Three Kingdoms'. Charles I was king of England, Ireland and the Scots, and you cannot understand what was happening in England in the 1640s without linking it intimately with what was going on in Ireland and Scotland, which was equally violent and equally profound. For me, this was a central myth that has been busted. The anglocentric view we have of British history is unsustainable and wrong.

But it is also interesting to look at the relationship between England and the rest of Britain, and ask why it was England that emerged as the central point of Great Britain. Why was England determining the relationships with the other nations, and why is the centre of the UK not Dublin or Edinburgh but London?

The answer goes back to the relationships within England in the 8th–10th centuries, when Wessex, Mercia, Kent and then Northumbria, which had been peopled by very different groups, all eventually came together. It was the beginnings of what was, for Europe, a very early centralisation of power, and London became the centre of that power, surrounded by the incredibly fertile lands of Wessex, Mercia and Kent and the strategically vital area of Northumbria. This determined that England would likely be in an economically superior position to Scotland and Ireland (Wales was absorbed politically into England relatively early on). And that is why much of *The Invention of Britain* is about England trying to negotiate and determine these relationships from a position of considerable economic, and hence military, strength.

When did the idea of a British identity emerge?

Britannia was a concept first introduced by the Romans, when it briefly went up as far as the Antonine Wall across central Scotland. But it went out of fashion – except for a brief period when Æthelstan proclaimed himself



James Douglas, the Duke of Queensberry, presenting the Acts of Union to Queen Anne in 1707. The union was prompted partly by Scottish financial troubles

'king of the whole of Britain' – until it re-emerged in the personal mission of James VI & I, who assumed the throne of England in 1603 to add to the Scottish one. He declared himself the king of Britain, and referred to Scotland as 'North Britain' and England as 'South Britain'. He introduced a common currency and attempted to push through the English parliament a fusion of the two systems, which would open up free trade and freedom of movement – very much the sort of thing the EU has stood for. But the English parliament started a commission to look into his various ideas and rejected the whole thing.

Nothing came to fruition under James but the idea of Britain was planted, and in 1707 came the union of England and Scotland. This was largely because of a problem with the succession. Queen Anne had several miscarriages and no heirs and the English needed the Scots to accept the Hanoverians as her successors. Meanwhile, the Scots were

facing serious economic problems and many wanted to participate in the profits of England's overseas empire.

There was resistance in both parliaments – after all, they would first have to vote themselves out of existence. But the union went through, and over the next two centuries the Scots benefited enormously from the growth of the British empire,

while Scotsmen and women contributed hugely to its expansion. The Scots also







had an increasingly significant presence in the professions in London and the Scottish enlightenment of the late 18th century fed into this tremendously.

So this union, while very difficult to achieve in 1707, led to an extraordinary fusion of intellectual, economic and military power that would define world politics over the next two centuries.

How far has Britain been shaped by outside forces?

Outside influences have been absolutely immense. We haven't had an English king since I can't remember when. The Normans and Plantagenets came from France; the Tudors were part-Welsh; the Stuarts Scots with a strong dose of French; William III Dutch; and then came the Germans. That's almost 1,000 years of European monarchs. Furthermore, the English and then British royalty didn't give up the patently ludicrous claim to rule France until 1800.

Our continental trading relationships were critical in the growth of our influence. In the 19th century, the really key intellectual relationship in Europe was between Britain, but England in particular, and Germany. The cross-fertilisation of ideas between these two drove the industrialisation of Europe. And you can see time and again that European influences on Britain and vice versa were critical, on an intellectual level and also because of the religious question – notably, Ireland's



The fact you're never further than 75 miles from the sea when you're in Britain must influence the way you relate to the outside world

relationship with the Vatican and France. The fact that Ireland remained Catholic meant that England always saw it as an Achilles heel – a treacherous territory through which a Catholic invasion could come. This led England in 1800 to pool sovereignty with Ireland but to exclude Catholics for a further 30 years, which reasserted confessional divisions that had ironically been overcome in the late 18th century with the formation of the United Irishmen [who sought to unite the country's Catholics and Protestants].

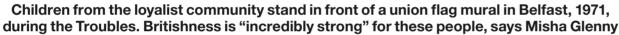
Trying to reconcile the Protestants and the Catholics since then proved almost impossible until the Good Friday Agreement in the 1990s. This was one of the key strategic errors of British policy, which led all the way to the Troubles and now Brexit. You can draw a line from the failure of the British to include the Catholics in a British polity right up to the backstop.

How important has Britain's island status been for its history?

Our history has been very much shaped by that, because it has meant we've had to be a seafaring nation from an early stage – and it has given us a certain amount of protection. When war was fought primarily at sea, it also gave us a tremendous advantage, from the era of the Armada onwards.

In terms of identity, our island status does mean we are slightly culturally removed from the European mainland, but the idea that the







My guess is that we'll be talking about Britain as a historical entity, not an active one, 100 years from now

Dutch feel less Dutch or the French less
French because they're not surrounded solely
by sea doesn't necessarily hold. Of course, the
Dutch do always have to be looking over their
shoulders at France and Germany and not just
outwards to the sea – but then Ireland has
played a similar role in terms of England's
consciousness, particularly if you take the
1605 gunpowder plot, when fear of Catholics in
England reached fever pitch. The existence
of Ireland as a strongly Catholic territory
conferred on England a sense it was never safe.

But there is no question: the fact you are never further than 75 miles from the sea in Britain must influence the way you relate to the outside world.

How far have the people of Britain adopted a British identity?

The concept of Britishness changes depending on where you are. It is incredibly strong in Northern Ireland among the loyalist community – much more so than for people in Bristol or Lincoln, for example, who, if asked, would probably say they were English.

I think the mistake made habitually by people outside the country, of conflating 'British' with 'English', is at the very core of the crisis we are suffering now. Even after 300 years of union, the British identity is fairly brittle and not as well entrenched in people's cultural sensibilities as a Scottish, English or Welsh identity.

Why, after 300 years, is that British identity under threat now?

There are a variety of reasons. There is the reckoning of Britain finally coming to terms with the fact that it is no longer a colonial power that defines global politics, although the process is unpredictable. Meanwhile there are parts of the community – particularly the Scots, but also the nationalists in Northern Ireland – who identify much more strongly with Europe than the English do, partly for historical reasons, partly for pragmatic reasons.

There is a thesis, which I think has a lot going for it, that says what is going on at the moment is a crisis of English identity, not Irish or Scottish – although there is considerable interplay between them, and also with regard to the European Union. I believe much of this was accentuated by the financial crash of 2008, when a relatively small faction in British society that was implacably opposed to the European Union was able to capitalise on the catastrophe and channel a whole variety of discontent into branding Brussels as the centre of all evil. And this does play on certain tropes of British identity that have been present for centuries.

This is really only just getting going. Brexit, whichever way it falls, will supercharge the issue, and whether we leave the European Union or not, I find it difficult to see how we can avoid a major constitutional crisis in the UK. And on that issue of the constitution,

there is endless mythologising and nostalgia about the 'mother of parliaments', but in this day and age it seems to me to be a pretty ludicrous anachronism not to have a written constitution. One of the reasons why the identity crisis is so profound is because we don't know how the relationships between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are regulated. You get different solutions for different parts of each country, and that leads to resentment, anger and political action, some of it intemperate.

In light of these issues, do you think that we will still be talking about Britain in 100 years' time?

My best guess is that, all other things being equal, we will probably be talking about Britain as a historical entity not an active one 100 years from now.

Misha Glenny is a journalist who has presented several series of *The Invention of...*, covering a range of countries, for BBC Radio 4. His books include *McMafia*, which has inspired a BBC One drama

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RADIO

The four-part series **The Invention of Britain** begins on Radio 4 on Sunday 24 February. Previous strands of the programme can be heard on BBC iPlayer Radio



VIKING WOMEN AT HOME AND AT WAR

From matriarchs and artisans to traders and travellers, **Judith Jesch** explores the often rich and adventurous lives of women in the Viking age

ILLUSTRATIONS BY LAURA GRACE HAINES

THE HOMEMAKER



As wife, host, teacher and storyteller, the mistress of the household was the fulcrum of Viking family life

There's no doubt about it: Viking women lived in a man's world. Viking men fought the wars, did most of the trading and were even, strictly speaking, the only true Vikings – the Old Norse word vikingar referred solely to men. For this point in history, however, Viking women enjoyed a high degree of social freedom. They could own property, ask for a divorce if not treated properly, and they shared responsibility for running farms and homesteads with their menfolk. They were also protected by law from a range of unwanted male attention.

Their chief sphere of influence was in the home, beginning when they married, often at an early age. By contemporary standards, Viking home life was noisy, dirty and smelly, but cosy and communal too. Most Vikings lived in a long, single-roomed structure, where seating and sleeping accommodation were arranged around a central hearth. Such 'longhouses' were the hubs of Viking domestic life, where people cooked, ate, socialised and slept.

As well as husband, wife and children, the Viking household was made up of elderly relatives and foster-children – and the role of caring for this extended family typically fell to women. The woman was also responsible for entertaining honoured guests, although it was primarily men who conducted practical, legal and political negotiations when the home was used for business.

Another important role played by women was handing on knowledge to the next generation in the home – in part by sharing poems and stories, including the famous myths and sagas that were later written down in medieval Iceland.

The mistress of the household also had responsibility for its valuables. As

the Viking home was also the centre of a family business, this included any raw materials produced – products that could be sold if there was a surplus. The discovery of weighing scales in certain female graves – they are particularly common in Russia – suggest that women, especially those living in urban areas, sometimes took charge of the family's finances and may have negotiated terms of sale or trade.

A married couple of *húsbóndi* (an Old Norse word which gives us English 'husband') and *hýfreyja* (wife) presided over the home as partners. The status accorded to the role of wife is clear from an inscription on the Hassmyra rune stone (Sweden), in which a bereaved *húsbóndi* claims that "no better *hýfreyja* will come to Hassmyra to run the estate" than his late wife, Odindisa. Common signs of wives' social status are the pairs of ornamental oval brooches, used as dress fasteners, found in large numbers of Viking-era female graves.



THE ARTISAN

The Viking home was powered by women's skilled work

The top of a Viking woman's to-do list of domestic duties was feeding her family and guests. And in a time before mass production, the preparation of food and drink was tough work. To bake flatbread, women first had to make flour by grinding corn. Meat and fish had to be preserved, while labour-intensive dairy products such as cheese, *skyr* (a yoghurt-like cheese) and butter featured in their diet too.

Women also made clothes for the household. Wool, once shorn from the sheep, had to be spun using a hand spindle and then woven on an upright loom. Linen was made from beating flax that was then also spun into a thread for

weaving. Smaller textile items such as socks were produced by *nålbinding*, a form of single-needle knitting. For more delicate work such as decorative borders on garments, tablet-weaving was an important skill.

Women also created tapestries to decorate the homes of wealthier households and important buildings. While few textiles survive from the time, the fragments of the Oseberg tapestry, excavated from a double-female ship burial in Norway (c830 AD), are intricate and sophisticated. More prosaically, women made the sails for Viking ships by stitching together woven strips of wool.

LAURA GRACE HAINES



THE BELIEVER

The female head of the family often doubled up as its spiritual guide

With many gods and goddesses in the pantheon, and a host of other supernatural beings stalking the Earth, the matter of who you believed in, and how and where you contacted them, varied across the Viking world. Cult practices could take place outdoors or in religious buildings. But it seems it was common to worship one's favoured deity in the home.

Evidence suggests such rites were the province of the female head of the household. In the early 11th century, the Icelandic poet Sigvatr came across women on a remote Swedish farm performing a sacrifice to the

elves – although, as a Christian, he was not allowed to witness the ceremony.

The term *gyðja* for a female cult practitioner may refer to such women, whose social status required that they perform religious rites. There are parallels with the better-documented masculine role of the *goði* – someone who seems to have had both secular and supernatural power in the Viking age.

We also have evidence of more specialised, travelling cult practitioners, both male and female, although what they actually did is still obscure.

There were a number of Norse goddesses – such as

Freyja, the goddess of love, sex and beauty, and Hel, the partly decomposed ruler of the netherworld – which we know about mainly through later Icelandic sources, although we can be sure about the Viking age origins of at least some of these figures.

From the evidence we can also deduce that Scandinavian women were drawn to Christianity, with devotion to the Virgin Mary confirmed in 11th-century Viking runic inscriptions from Sweden and Norway. An enormous rune stone from Dynna, Norway on which a mother commemorates her dead daughter depicts a nativity scene.

Whether they fought in battle or not, conflict was a fact of life for many Viking women

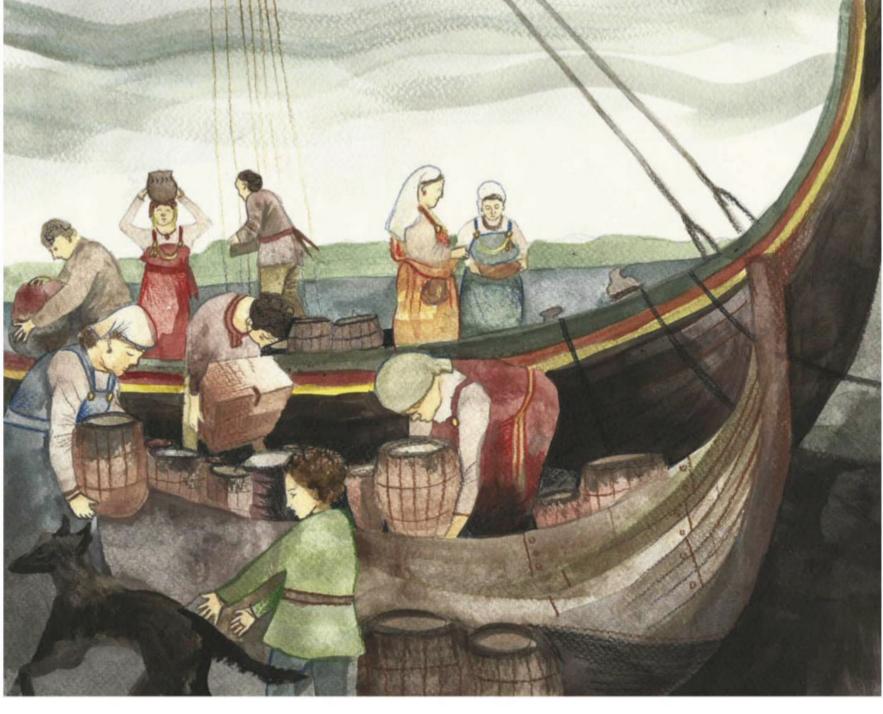
War in the Viking age was fought at close quarters with swords, spears and axes. Women could not escape such violence, especially if they were part of a group or community under attack, or travelling with a group of merchants who had to defend their wares. However, conclusive evidence for female participation in war as trained and regular warriors is currently slight, despite the recent interpretation of a 10th-century 'warrior' burial at Birka in Sweden as being that of a woman. The significance of this burial is still under debate, while in other instances women found buried with 'weapons' had actually been laid to rest with everyday tools, such as axes for chopping firewood.

Recent research on the Great Heathen Army, a Scandinavian force that harried the kingdoms of England in the 860s and 870s, suggests this was less an army and more a large, mixed and mobile group of people. They engaged in crafts and trading as well as raiding, and certainly included women and children in their number, as evidenced by textile-making tools found at Torksey, Lincolnshire, and a children's burial at Repton, Derbyshire.

When this group was encamped, no doubt everyone had to join in the defence if they were attacked. But as the Viking armies in England became more organised, there were other options. In the 890s, notes the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Hæsten's army put their women and children in a place of safety in East Anglia before embarking on raids.

The female role in war is also explored in Old Norse mythology, where valkyries – armed female spirits – assist Odin, the god of war. Their job is to select the warriors allowed into Valhalla, who will help Odin await Ragnarök – an apocalyptic series of events including a deadly battle between the gods and their enemies.





Intrepid female travellers journeyed to destinations as far-flung as Jerusalem, Rome, Russia and North America

The Viking age was a time of exploration. Between the 8th and 11th centuries, those with roots in Scandinavia travelled to the Caspian Sea and the Mediterranean, and crossed the Atlantic to reach North America. Women participated in most of these voyages, and in the trading and settlement that were their main purpose. There is evidence for this in the Scandinavian-style female jewellery found extensively in present-day Russia, Ukraine and further afield, showing that the Viking traders and rulers known as the 'Rus' took their wives and families with them. The female jewellery discovered by metal detectorists in eastern England in the last few decades offers further evidence of female settlement in the Danelaw (the Viking-dominated parts of north and east England).

As for Iceland, an uninhabited island at the beginning of the Viking age, it would not exist as a nation today if its settlers had not included women, with some born in the British Isles rather than in Scandinavia. While most of the first settlers of Iceland recorded in the medieval Landnámabók (Book of Settlements) are men, 13 women are named as having made the journey in an open ship to claim land in Iceland. Most famous of these is Aud (also known as Unn) the Deep-Minded, who is celebrated in Laxdæla saga for her achievements in moving her whole household from Scotland to Iceland, via Orkney and the Faroes.

Further afield, both the archaeology of L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland, where a spindle whorl and bone needle have been excavated, and the Icelandic sagas, suggest that women participated in the voyages to North America. And with the coming of Christianity, women were soon going on pilgrimage to Rome or Jerusalem, as in the case of the 11th-century Swedish woman Ingirun, who set up a rune stone in memory of herself. The inscription states that she intended to travel to Jerusalem – and she appears to have been uncertain as to whether she would come back!

Judith Jesch is professor of Viking studies at the University of Nottingham. Her books include *The Viking Diaspora* (Routledge, 2015)

DISCOVER MORE

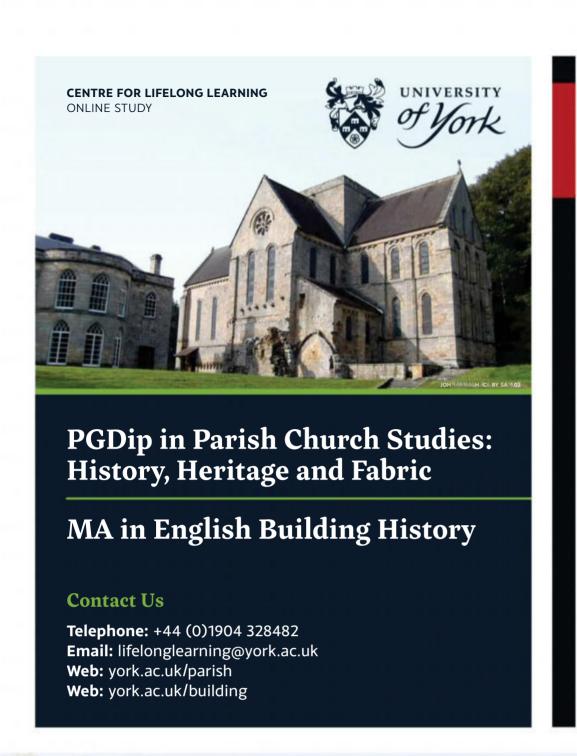
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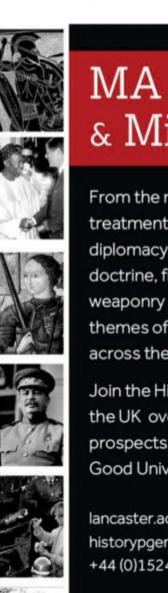
► The 2019 **JORVIK Viking**Festival in York is this year themed around Viking women. The event takes place from 20-27 February.

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► The Viking World
by Stefan Brink, with
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BHISSIAN FIASCO

A century ago, British troops were engaged in the maelstrom of the Russian civil war. Their campaign against the Bolsheviks, writes **Nick Hewitt**, was a bloody debacle that enraged a restive public back home



BBC History Magazine 53





ABOVE: A white knight attacks the red Bolshevik dragon in a 1919 White Russian poster LEFT: British, Czechoslovak and Russian troops man a gun at the Archangel front, June 1919. By the end of the year, British forces had quit northern Russia altogether

ast year, the world marked the centenary of the armistice that ended the First World War. But for thousands of British soldiers, the fighting went on. On 11 November 1918, Thomas Dunlop, from Newton Heath, was part of a 400-strong garrison shivering in improvised trenches around Tulgas, north Russia. As Dunlop's comrades-in-arms on the western front laid down their weapons, the 19-year-old private in 2/10th Battalion, the Royal Scots, was in a vicious firefight with 2,500 Bolsheviks, supported by gunboats.

For four days Dunlop's company, alongside American riflemen and a few Canadian field guns, defended their nondescript piece of Russia. The Bolsheviks finally withdrew, leaving hundreds of dead behind, but victory came at a price. US sergeant Silver Parrish recalled how "we licked the Bolo [Bolshevik] good and hard but lost seven killed and 14 wounded, and the Canadians lost quite a few and the Royal Scots lost 36 men".

Thomas Dunlop was one of them. His body was lost, but his name appears on a lonely memorial at Archangel. One hundred years on, it's perhaps appropriate to ask, what was he doing there?

Dunlop's terrible fate was partly the result of what today's military might call 'mission creep'. At first, Britain's primary motivation in its dealings with Russia was to keep it in the First World War: to prop up a leading ally in the fight against the Central Powers. Yet, by 1917, that strategy was unravelling.

Russia's tsarist autocracy had been tottering for decades. In 1917 it finally broke under the pressure of a world war for which it was ill-equipped to fight, and growing demands for greater freedom by a resentful and hungry population. Tsar Nicholas II's regime collapsed in March, to be replaced by a Provisional Government. The new administration, however, failed to extricate Russia from the war, and paid the price when Vladimir Lenin's Bolsheviks seized the capital, Petrograd, on 7 November 1917. Less than three weeks after the Bolshevik revolution, Lenin began negotiations with the Germans, which ended with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918.

But no sooner had Russia quit one conflict than it entered another. Counterrevolutionary armies and alternative governments, known collectively as 'White Russians', now began to form all over the country. They were soon posing a serious threat to Bolshevik authority. By July 1918, Nicholas II and his family had been executed, and Russia had disintegrated into a chaotic civil war.

Russia's collapse was a catastrophe for the Allies, as it offered Germany an opportunity to transfer millions of troops to the west.

The British often found that the White Russian troops they were fighting alongside hated each other more than the Bolsheviks

Allied policy makers also feared that Germany might gain access to Russian oil and grain, and that German troops might seize nearly a million tonnes of armaments, munitions and other stores, now piled in great heaps on the dockside at Archangel and Murmansk in northern Russia, and Vladivostok in Siberia.

In a desperate attempt to forestall this nightmare scenario, the Allies decided to hurl troops from Britain, France, the United States and a dozen other countries into the middle of the bloody maelstrom that Russia had become. Most had little idea what they were doing. Among them was 18-year-old Bob Vincent of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment who, despite serving in southern Russia for nearly a year, later wrote that he "never really





ABOVE: **Troops** during the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. The Bolsheviks' rise to power proved a nightmare scenario for Russia's allies in the First World War LEFT: Royal Engineers take to their skis to lay wire at the Archangel front in 1919. One **Engineer declared** that their deployment was "simply scandalous"

met any Russians at all or had any idea why I was there". If Vincent failed to grasp what he was fighting for, he was far from alone. But that fact didn't stop the British government despatching troops to combat zones across the massive Russian landmass – most notably in the north.

One of the most significant deployments came in August 1918 when Allied troops landed at Archangel in support of the White Russian 'Northern Regional Government'. Over time the British-led force expanded to include US, Canadian and French troops, and pushed south along the Dvina and other rivers to secure the railways. Supported by aircraft and the Royal Navy's improvised Dvina River Flotilla, the Allied Expeditionary Force made unexpectedly good progress against the Bolsheviks, but many of its soldiers were old or unfit and they were dreadfully exposed. Their Russian allies were unreliable, and winter was approaching.

Elsewhere British warships operated against the Bolshevik Baltic Fleet, losing more than 100 sailors and several warships in the process. The Royal Navy also scored the intervention's most unlikely success, when Lieutenant Augustus Agar's tiny torpedoarmed coastal motor boats penetrated the heavily defended Bolshevik naval base at Kronstadt twice, sinking the cruiser *Oleg* and a submarine depot ship, and claiming two

battleships damaged. Agar was awarded the Victoria Cross.

Smaller British expeditionary forces and 'military missions' were sent into Siberia, the Caspian and the Caucasus. In the latter, 'Dunsterforce', a few hundred soldiers and some armoured cars under the command of Major-General Lionel Dunsterville, worked with local nationalists and other counterrevolutionaries – but found that they often hated each other more than the Bolsheviks.

Siberian landgrab

The underlying politics of the international intervention was incredibly complex. Britain and France actively supported attempts to overthrow the Bolsheviks, with President Woodrow Wilson of the United States in reluctant support, against the advice of his own War Department. Yet by far the largest intervention force was the 70,000-strong Japanese one, and their crusade was anything but ideological. The Japanese government had an eye on seizing territory in Siberia, and the behaviour of their troops, according to one British Foreign Office memorandum, "was... that of a people who intend to annex what they have occupied". They cared little about keeping Russia in the war or who governed it afterwards.

Even within the British government, there were hawks and doves. Prime Minister David

IN CONTEXT

The Russian civil war

The Bolshevik Revolution of 7 November 1917 was followed by a wave of armed insurrections across the former Russian empire by anti-Bolshevik factions loosely characterised as 'White' Russians. At the height of the civil war the Whites appeared to surround the Bolshevik strongholds of Moscow and Petrograd, but in reality they were a disparate group of moderate socialists, ethnic nationalists, Romanov loyalists, proto-dictators and bandits, and never really formed an effective opposition.

In Siberia the Whites were led by their self-proclaimed 'supreme leader', the former tsarist naval officer Admiral Alexander Kolchak. The Allied intervention in north Russia was partly intended to link up with Kolchak, but his regime was corrupt and unpopular and he lost the support of his most formidable force of 40,000 former Czech and Slovak prisoners of war and deserters, known as 'the Czechoslovak Legion'. Kolchak was captured by the Bolsheviks and executed.

Around the Baltic coast, Estonians and Latvians were fighting for independence alongside the former tsarist general Yudenich's White Russians, who were trying to seize Petrograd. To further complicate matters, German troops and the paramilitary Freikorps were still trying to seize territory. The Germans left and Latvia and Estonia secured independence, but Petrograd remained defiantly 'Red'.

In southern Russia and Ukraine, the Whites coalesced around General Anton Denikin's 'Volunteer Army'. Denikin (pictured below) won a series of early victories but, as well as the Bolshevik Red Army, he also had to contend with Ukrainian and other separatist forces, ethnic militias and even the Turkish army. Although the British sent Denikin millions of pounds' worth of arms his army still disintegrated; the remnants were destroyed in Crimea in 1920.

The Russian civil war effectively ended with the founding of the Soviet Union on 30 December 1922, although some insurgencies continued into the 1930s. In total, the conflict may have cost as many as 12 million lives.



Lloyd George wanted to keep Russia fighting, but was perfectly happy to work with the Bolsheviks if necessary, telling his war cabinet in early 1918 that "it was of no concern to the British government what socialist experiment or what form of government the Bolsheviks were trying to establish in Russia".

In contrast Winston Churchill, Lloyd George's war minister after January 1919, was a zealous ideological crusader against Bolshevism, who declaimed in a speech in Dundee that "civilisation is being completely extinguished over gigantic areas, while Bolsheviks hop and caper like troops of ferocious baboons amid the ruins of cities and the corpses of their victims". Churchill even argued for rebuilding the defeated German army as a bulwark against Bolshevism. These internal contradictions were reflected on the ground, to the detriment of military cohesion. At one point, the British were operating in a notional partnership with the Bolshevik administration in Murmansk (which sought Allied help in facing down the threat of a Finnish attack) while fighting against Bolshevik forces elsewhere in the country.

By the time Churchill had become war minister, of course, the First World War had ended, and the only comprehensible motive for intervention had disappeared. A warweary British population now started to question exactly why British soldiers were still

With democratic socialism gaining traction, many Britons opposed making war on communists to restore tyranny

fighting and dying in Russia. With democratic socialism gaining traction, many people opposed making war on communists to restore tyranny. In January 1919, the *Daily Express* reflected popular opinion when it paraphrased Bismarck, writing that "the frozen plains of eastern Europe are not worth the bones of a single grenadier".

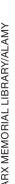
British opposition coalesced around the 'Hands Off Russia' campaign, which was launched by prominent socialists in January 1919. The Socialist Labour party politician William Paul, a founding member of the movement's National Committee, summed up its motives when he wrote that "the sheer savagery of these [White Russian] usurpers has only had the effect of driving honest moderate socialists and

non-Bolshevik elements into the camp of Lenin and Trotsky".

The communist firebrand Harry Pollitt described how the 'Hands off Russia' message was promoted in London's East End by a now-forgotten evangelist, "Mrs Walker", who roamed the streets "talking to groups of women, telling them about Russia, how we must help them, and asking them to tell their husbands to keep their eyes skinned to see that no munitions went to help those who were trying to crush the Russian Revolution".

'Hands Off Russia' scored its most celebrated success on 10 May 1920, when dockers in London stopped loading a ship, the *Jolly George*, when they discovered it was carrying munitions bound for Poland, the latest British anti-Bolshevik proxy. By now, government enthusiasm for intervention had waned and the cargo was unloaded. 'Hands off Russia' went on to provide a strong nucleus for the Communist party of Great Britain when it was founded a few weeks later.

With the fighting against Germany over, opposition to a new war that nobody understood spread to the troops in the field. One Royal Engineer serving in north Russia wrote that it was "simply scandalous... to be fighting now and under such conditions when there is peace on other fronts". Meanwhile, Major EM Allfrey of the Royal Fusiliers recorded a rumour in his diary on 2 July 1919 that "the







ABOVE: The White Army's 'supreme leader', Admiral Alexander Kolchak (seated), with British officers in Russia, 1918 LEFT: Members of the British Socialist party urge the government to keep their 'Hands Off Russia'. Britons had little stomach for a war many didn't understand

coal miners have threatened that unless the British force in Russia is home within 40 days, they will all come out on strike... in other words, they too are Bolsheviks".

Brutal little battles

Many members of the British forces found themselves living in squalid conditions, fighting unacknowledged but brutal little battles against a determined and ferocious enemy. There were too few troops, and many were second-rate and desperate to get home; even the Royal Marines embarrassingly experienced a mutiny in Russia.

The White Russian troops were even more prone to mutiny and desertion; many were also Bolshevik sympathisers. Lieutenant Brian Horrocks of the Middlesex Regiment trained some of them: "The filthiest and most unkempt mass of humanity I have ever seen in my life... the dregs from all the call-up depots in Siberia." There was almost no chance of unifying them into an effective opposition. One regiment of British-trained White Russians went over to the Bolsheviks en masse on 21 July 1919, arresting their commanding officer, a Colonel Laurie, and the other British officers. "At the British offices the day was passing in its usual way," recalled one of the ring leaders, Viktor Schetinin. "We rushed in and... pointed our rifles at the colonel. He was so surprised he

just sat there as if he was nailed to the chair..."

By now, it was rapidly becoming evident that the British-led force was too small and its Russian allies too unenthusiastic for the intervention to end in anything but failure. In fact that had been the case since at least the spring of 1919 when the British commander-in-chief Brigadier-General Edmund Ironside, who had led his multinational army in the north with skill in the face of a ferocious enemy, decided to carry out one last offensive to buy time to withdraw. To help him, strong reinforcements – the British North Russian Relief Force – arrived in May largely at Churchill's instigation, commanded by General Sir Henry Rawlinson. The British launched a series of attacks then retreated, fighting all the way. "As we fought our way up the river," recalled Lieutenant-Commander Kenneth Michell of the monitor HMS M.33, "the Bolshies... drifted down all sorts of mines, frequently covered by brushwood".

On 26–27 September the British evacuated Archangel, and Murmansk two weeks later. By the spring of 1920 the British and most other Allied contingents had departed Russia altogether. Only the Japanese force remained, finally withdrawing in 1925.

The Russian civil war came to an end in 1922. But the legacy of suspicion caused by the Allies' military support for the Whites, and their associated spying and sabotage in

Moscow and Petrograd, lasted long after the last soldier had left. This might help explain Stalin's difficult relationship with Churchill during the Second World War, and even the well-documented grudging reception received by Allied convoys to the Soviet Union. After all, the last time some Murmansk citizens had seen western ships in their harbours, the same countries had been trying to destroy the revolution, not defend it.

For James and Jane Dunlop of Newton Heath, however, undoubtedly the most significant consequence of this ill-judged decision was to condemn their son Thomas and hundreds of men like him to a lonely death in the snow.

Nick Hewitt is an author and historian, who works as head of Exhibitions and Collections for the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth

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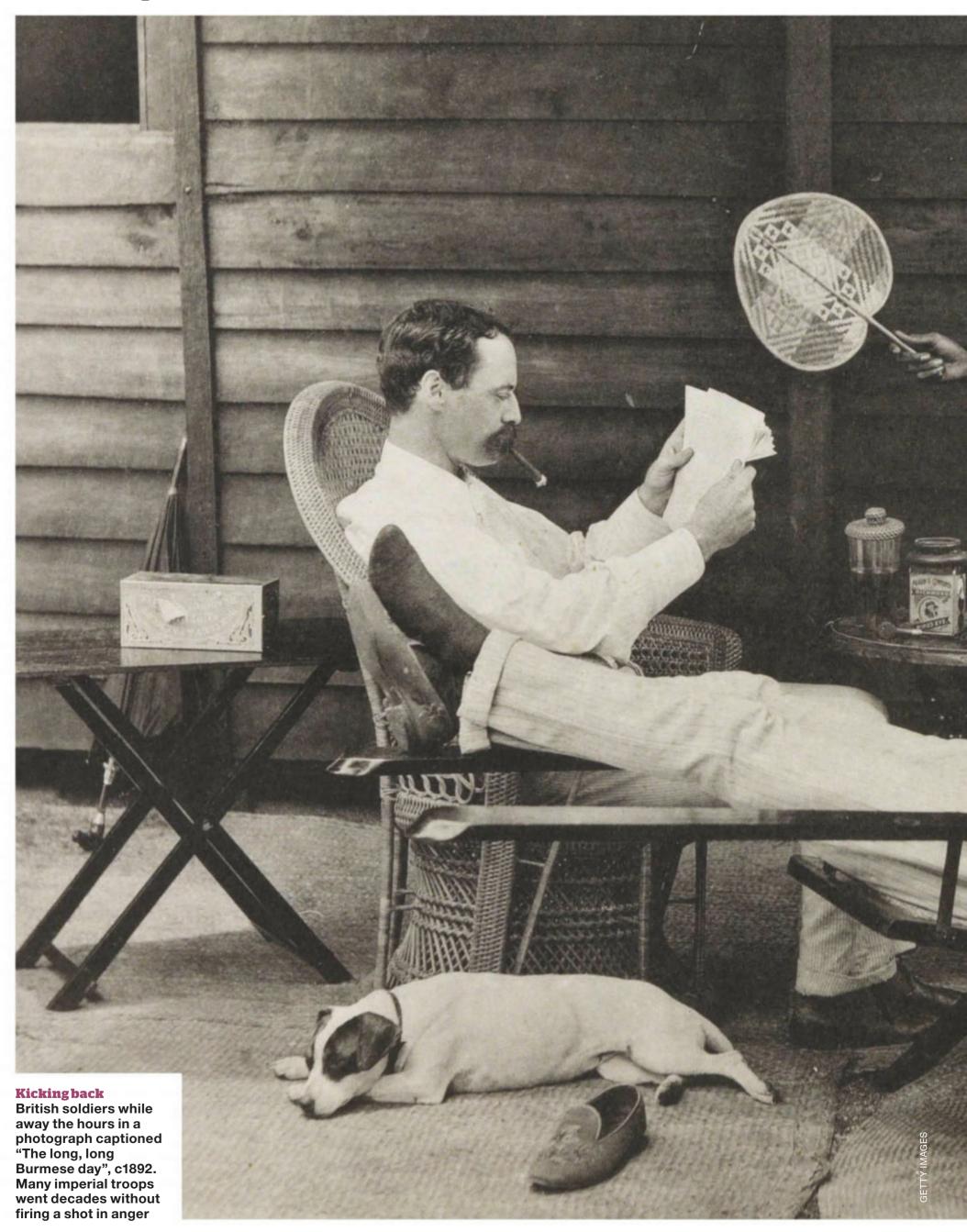
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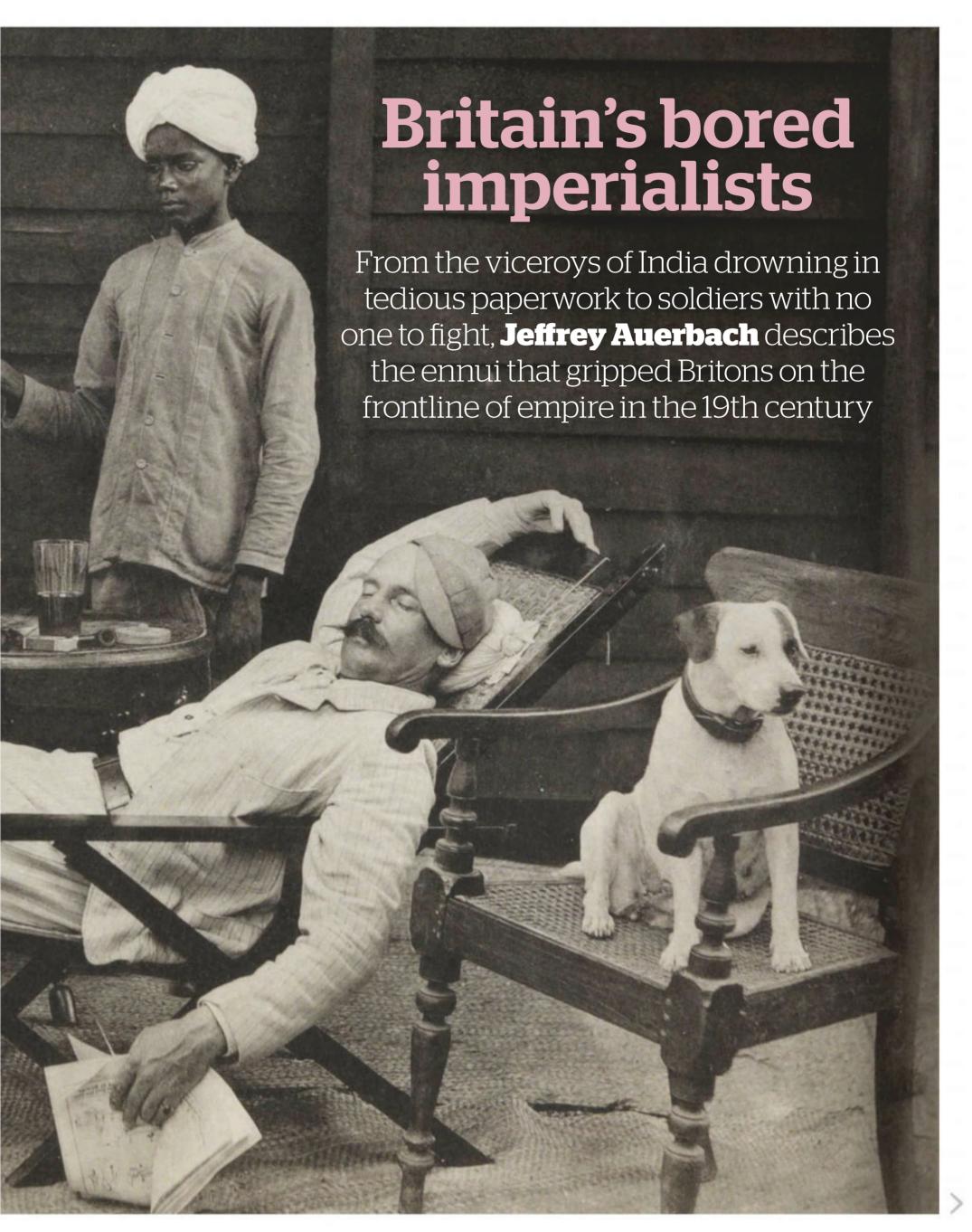


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The British empire





he British empire was the largest in the history of the world – one on which the sun never set. It was also a place of widespread and at times crushing monotony, as the empire grew larger and more bureaucratic with fewer opportunities to discover the unknown or interact with indigenous people.

Not everyone found the empire boring, nor was it boring all the time. It would also be a stretch to suggest that the millions of people over whom the British ruled found the empire boring, although the novelist Jamaica Kincaid claimed in *A Small Place* (1988), her moving portrait of postcolonial Antigua, that: "Every native everywhere lives a life of overwhelming and crushing banality and boredom." Still, the Aboriginal experience with British settlers was a story of great violence and hardship, and for many Indians and Africans the empire was devastating and dehumanising.

For the British, however, boredom was increasingly how they experienced the empire, whether it was the Marquess of Hastings complaining that his journey up the Ganges in 1815 was "extremely tedious", to gold diggers in Australia who groused about "the monotony of bush life". These feelings of boredom had very real consequences, from soldiers who succumbed to alcoholism, to émigrés who returned home, to officials who quit the imperial service. The early empire may have been about wonder and marvel but, as the following eight examples prove, the 19th-century empire was far less exciting.

OCEAN TRAVEL

Tedium on the high seas

Throughout the 18th century, voyages to India were exciting and at times harrowing. Ships were small; navigation was primitive; the risk of being shipwrecked was constant; and rations were limited, necessitating stops at islands like St Helena for fresh water and to enjoy some sightseeing. By the mid-19th century, however, as ships took on paying passengers who were not involved in work onboard, attitudes had shifted. As Henry Keene declared in 1897, looking back on his years in the East India Company: "Nothing can be duller than a long sea-voyage."

Fanny Parkes, who sailed to India in 1822, felt the same way. Although she was bursting with enthusiasm when her voyage began, her ship was soon mired in a "a dead calm". She pleaded: "Give me any day a storm and a half in preference! It was so miserable." Near the Cape, she saw some whales, but was "disappointed" by their small size. The Indian Ocean brought terrible heat, and they were again becalmed, this time for 18 days. Despite her best efforts, there was no avoiding "the tedium of the voyage".

The journey to Australia was even more arduous, lasting 120 days. The Great Circle Route (around the Cape of Good Hope and across the Southern Ocean), mapped out in the 1840s, shortened the voyage by a month, but required passengers to sail out of sight of land almost the entire time. It was "Monotonous in the extreme", one emigrant grumbled in 1864. Although steamships would quicken the journey, during the middle decades of the 19th century numerous passengers complained that they had "nothing to do".



noted one traveller

en route to Tasmania

British artillery officers in India, c1860-80. "Months passed without producing an event worth noticing," wrote one soldier in the 1840s

THE MILITARY

A drab uniformity

There were many reasons why soldiers were bored. Top of the list, according to Julius Jeffreys, staff surgeon in Cawnpore in the 1830s, was "the dull routine of barrack imprisonment". Soldiers, especially in India, frequently commented on the heat that confined them to their tents for hours a day with nothing to do.

For some, it was the work itself. John Mercier MacMullen of the 13th Light Infantry recalled the "uniform sameness" of his daily routine in the 1840s when he was stationed in Sukkur. Every day he rose at the same time and went to regimental headquarters, where he sat in "the same chair and the same side of the table", and where his work was "nearly ever of the same character". He added: "Months passed away without producing an

event worth noticing".

Many soldiers went decades without fighting a single skirmish. The 10th (North Lincolnshire) Regiment of Foot, after serving in India from 1846–58, did not do battle again until it was sent to Malaya in 1875. And the 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment of Foot, which fought in the Second Sikh War of 1848–49, was essentially at rest until it went to Burma in the late 1880s.

These lengthy periods of inaction led Lieutenant-Colonel George Hennessy to complain about "the same sameness day after day" while serving in Kandahar in 1879. The well-known saying that war consists of "months of boredom punctuated by moments of terror" had its origins in the 19th-century British empire.

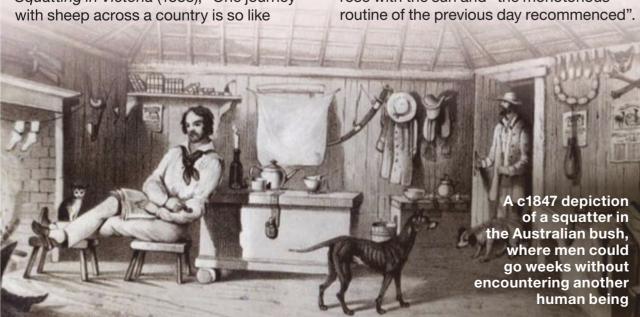


BUSH LIFE

Prisoners of the outback

Few occupations have been as celebrated in Australian history as the squatter (a settler or former convict). The reality, however, was very different from the mythology. As Edward Curr wrote in *Recollections of Squatting in Victoria* (1883), "One journey with sheep across a country is so like

another." Curr, who sailed to Australia in 1842 to take over the management of his father's estate near Melbourne, felt unfulfilled by the "little household jobs" that took up most of his days. Every morning he rose with the sun and "the monotonous routine of the previous day recommenced".



Aside from reading, Curr's only means of passing the time was to pace back and forth in front of the hut like a caged animal, an evocative indication of how bored he must have been. He wrote about the many "intervals of solitude", one of which lasted three weeks, during which time he did not see a single person. He felt like "a prisoner with nothing to occupy me".

For John Henderson, who emigrated to New South Wales in 1838 at the age of 19, every day in the bush was "a repetition of the one that went before it". The same was true for gold diggers, who even at the height of the Gold Rush in the 1850s complained about their "monotonous work".

Edward Curr's only means of passing the time was to pace back and forth in front of the hut like a caged animal

The British empire



Explorer Mary Kingsley compared life in Africa to being "shut up in a library"

EXPLORATION

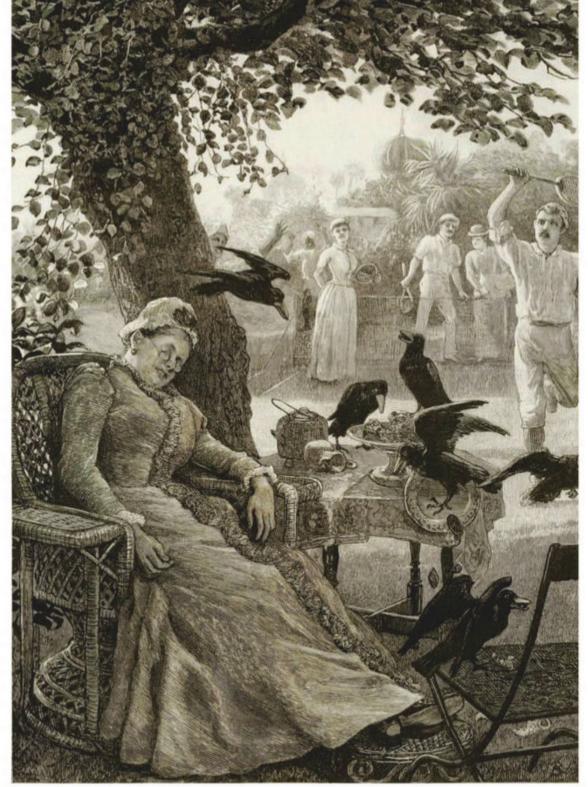
The "dreary" continent

Britain's imperial expansion gave explorers unprecedented opportunities to venture into uncharted lands. Henry Morton Stanley crisscrossed Africa's interior, Charles Sturt journeyed deep into Australia's deserts, and Mary Kingsley hacked her way through the Congo with great aplomb. Yet even these intrepid men and women got bored.

Stanley himself wrote of the challenges of "enduring deadly monotony" and complained about the "endless occupations" during his journey "through the Dark Continent". Not the least of these was his obsessive accounting for each piece of equipment, an impossible task given the amount of it, the length of the journey and the frequency of theft.

For Sturt, who made two epic journeys through southern Australia from 1828–31, it was the landscape itself that was boring. Sturt described the terrain as "dreary" far more than he characterised it as "picturesque".

And Mary Kingsley complained about having to eat the same kind of fish every night when what she really wanted was "strange fish". But that was Africa all over, she grumbled, "presenting one with familiar objects when one least requires them". It was like "being shut up in a library, whose books you cannot read, all the while tormented, terrified and bored".



Crows gatecrash a tennis party in India, as depicted in an engraving from 1891

WOMEN

Ladies who lunched... and little else

There were many reasons why women were bored, especially in India. As Flora Annie Steel wrote in her autobiography, *The Garden of Fidelity* (1929), "The majority of European women in India have nothing to do... few companions of [their] own sex... and above all, in many cases, an empty nursery."

The sheer number of servants that Anglo-Indian households employed meant that British women in India had few domestic duties. Whereas the wife of an assistant under-secretary in Whitehall might have enjoyed the services of four servants, in India she would have employed about 40.

Women could enjoy familiar rituals such as morning calls and garden parties, but the small size of the European community meant that social life in India was limited, with few opportunities to meet new people. Because Anglo-Indian society was so insular, the same women met day after day to eat the same meals and

exchange the same banal pleasantries.

British women generally learned little about India while they were there, and rarely spoke an Indian language apart from a few words of 'kitchen Hindustani'. Reading was a possibility, but books and magazines were in short supply. By the late 19th century women were enjoying tennis and archery, but in hot weather even these activities came to a standstill.

The same women met day after day to eat the same meals and exchange the same banal pleasantries

Purgatory for pen-pushers

As the administration of the empire became more bureaucratic during the 19th century, imperial officials at all levels found themselves increasingly disenchanted with their work. William Bentinck (pictured), governor-general in India from

1828–35, complained of "boredom with the overwhelming load of uninteresting business". In his diary for 10 November 1908, Leonard Woolf wrote "Routine", an entry he repeated each day for four straight days and numerous other times while

serving a three-year appointment as a civil servant in Ceylon.

Part of the problem was the increase in regulations and paperwork, which made a governor's day repetitive and trivial. "Dullness is the central characteristic of an Indian viceroy's life," Lord Dufferin complained. He found his work "very uninteresting", and resigned a year before his term was up.

Lord Lytton, another viceroy, wrote that India was "one incessant official grind from morning to night". This was true even in Simla, the summer capital of the Raj, where the work carried on just as it did in Calcutta. Lytton wrote that it could take "the whole day and most of the night" to read and answer correspondence. He described the government of India as "a despotism of office-boxes".



Nothing to write home about

By the early 1800s, thousands of Britons were embarking on sightseeing tours of imperial outposts. And, thanks to a proliferation of travelogues and the widespread circulation of engravings and paintings showing the empire's natural and cultural wonders, these travellers had high expectations of what awaited them.

In the eyes of many British tourists, however, imperial sites often paled in comparison to the glowing treatment they received at the hands of well-compensated artists whose careers depended on making India, South Africa and Australia as attractive as possible. Even the most picturesque places were rarely as spectacular in

person as when portrayed in art.

Travellers also became so focused on seeing the popular sights, such as the Taj Mahal, that they paid less attention to what lay in between.

Numerous artists described how travelling across India in search of the picturesque could be "tedious". Robert Smith, an army captain who had taken art lessons from George Chinnery, was a talented painter who produced a two-volume *Pictorial Journal of Travels in Hindustan from 1828 to 1833*, now stored in the Victoria & Albert Museum, that he obviously intended to publish. Yet almost every time Smith left a city, he complained that the scenery was "uninteresting".

A southern African landscape, as depicted in the 19th century. The empire's natural treasures didn't always live up to tourists' expectations





"Man of action" Lord Curzon with his wife, Mary, and a slain tiger

HUNTING

Bored to death

Big-game hunting was part of the lore of empire, but the pursuit of trophies was often tedious and disappointing. Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India from 1899 to 1905, loved to hunt, and a picture of him standing over a dead tiger (above) helped cement his reputation as a man of action who could tame the natural world – and presumably India as well. Tiger hunting, however, was rarely so successful. On one occasion, Curzon sat in a tree for hours and saw nothing bigger than a frog. On another eight-day expedition he fired his rifle only once.

Nor was this unusual. A century earlier, Lord Hastings complained that on several occasions he had gone looking for tigers, but that despite his best efforts, he did not find any. Emily Eden reported that her brother George, Lord Auckland, who served as governorgeneral from 1836–42, had gone out tiger-hunting several times but "never had a glimpse of a tiger, though here and there... saw the footprints of one".

Frank Swettenham had a similar experience in Malaya in the 1870s. He went on several hunting expeditions "but to very little avail", even though the region was "much frequented by elephants, tigers, rhinoceros, and wild buffaloes". On one excursion he saw nothing more exciting than a pig and some jungle fowl before rain forced him back.

Although there were numerous books about big-game hunting in Africa, the reality, at least in Asia, was rather more boring than the fantasy.

Jeffrey Auerbach is professor of history at California State University, Northridge. His latest book is *Imperial Boredom: Monotony and the* British Empire (Oxford University Press, 2018)

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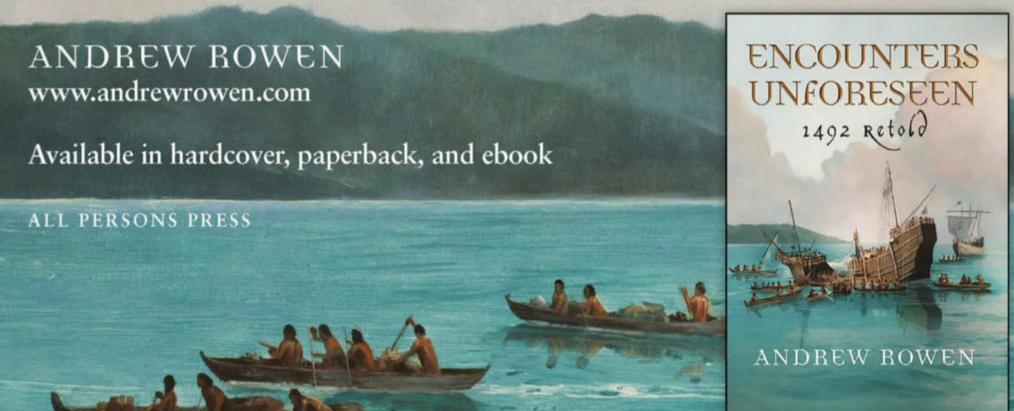
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BOOKS





INTERVIEW / CATHERINE HANLEY

"Honestly, if I were her, I'd have wanted to put my fist through a wall"

Catherine Hanley talks to **Ellie Cawthorne** about Matilda, the legitimate daughter of Henry I who – blocked by her gender from the English throne – began a bitter civil war for the crown

BBC History Magazine 65

PROFILE CATHERINE HANLEY

Catherine Hanley is a medieval historian, and author of fiction and non-fiction books, including *Louis: The French Prince Who Invaded England* (Yale, 2016), *Give Up the Dead* (The History Press, 2018) and *Whited Sepulchres* (The History Press, 2014).

IN CONTEXT

Born in 1102, Matilda was the daughter of King

Henry I and the granddaughter of William the Conqueror. As Henry I's only legitimate child at the time of his death, she had a strong claim to the English throne. However, there was opposition to the idea of a female ruler, and her cousin Stephen was crowned king. From 1135–53, the pair were embroiled in a battle for the throne often known as 'the Anarchy'. This civil war was finally brought to an end by a negotiated peace that saw Matilda's son appointed Stephen's heir. He went on to become King Henry II.

What were the most important events of Matilda's early life?

When she was just eight, Matilda was shipped off to Europe to marry Holy Roman Emperor Henry V. She was sent away from her family and everything she knew, to a foreign country, to marry a much older man she'd never met. That's the sort of thing we now understand could traumatise a child for life, but different rules applied in the 12th century. Rather than crumbling into a heap, the young Matilda grabbed hold of the opportunity with both hands. By age 12, she was multilingual and had a fine grasp of politics. By 14 she had been crowned empress, and by 16 she was ruling Italy as her husband's regent. It looked like her future was going to be as a queen consort in the empire, but in 1125 everything changed when Matilda was widowed and her father, Henry I, summoned her back to England.

How was Matilda's life changed by her father's death?

Henry's original expectation was that his son William Adelin would follow him on the throne. But in 1120, the 17-year-old William drowned in the *White Ship* disaster, leaving Henry with just one legitimate child – Matilda. This presented a dilemma for Henry: he was keen that he should be succeeded on the throne by his own child, but it was unprecedented to leave the crown to a woman. Nonetheless, Henry named Matilda as his heir. England's barons and nobles all took a public oath that they would support his daughter's claim to the throne, and among those who took that oath was Matilda's cousin Stephen of Blois.

In December 1135, Henry died in

Normandy. Matilda was hundreds of miles away in Anjou [her second marriage was to the Count of Anjou] at the time. Stephen saw his chance and made the most of it. Before Matilda had even heard the news of her father's death, Stephen had crossed the Channel, secured the royal treasury, ridden to London and had himself crowned as king. As far as most people were concerned, he was England's new monarch and Matilda was written out of the story.

At this point, it would have been very easy for Matilda to just give up. But she was not that sort of person. Initially, she didn't have the resources to launch an attack on England. Plus she was pregnant, which made it very difficult to travel. But eventually her opportunity arose through the defection of her half-brother Robert of Gloucester. As Henry I's illegitimate son, Robert could not have a claim to the throne himself, but he threw his considerable riches and resources behind Matilda. With Robert's backing, Matilda was finally able to invade England.

What drove Matilda to risk everything by taking on Stephen for England's throne?

Matilda felt entitled to the throne, and rightly so! She was the only surviving legitimate child of the previous king and had been recognised publicly as his heir. She was also a multilingual adult of vast political and governmental experience; most medieval kings would bite your hand off to be succeeded by somebody with that CV. It should have been the easiest handover of power in history, but the sole fact that Matilda was Henry's daughter, rather than his son, meant that a whole heap of trouble was unleashed.

Although Matilda's position as Countess of Anjou was perfectly comfortable, it was a definite step down from what she had been used to. It certainly wasn't on the same level as being empress, or queen of England. For

Many men couldn't cope with the idea that a woman might wish to wield power

10 years, she had been recognised as the heir to England's throne – her expectations had been raised. All the way through her battle for the crown, Matilda continued to position herself as England's rightful monarch. She had coins minted with her face on them, and gave away royal appointments.

Why was the idea of a female monarch so difficult for people to stomach?

While some 12th-century women did wield a lot of power, they always did so on behalf of male relatives. For example, nobody made a fuss about Matilda ruling Italy because she was acting as a regent for her husband. Her authority was contained within male power structures. But many men simply couldn't cope with the idea that a woman might wish to wield power on her own behalf – or might be capable of doing so. Matilda's claim to the throne was not that she wanted to be a regent or a consort, it was that she was the legitimate heir in her own right. Interestingly, the meaning of the word 'queen' at the time didn't even apply to ruling monarchs – it meant the wife of the king. So, in the eyes of many, Matilda wasn't trying to become England's queen, but its female king.

How did this impact on Matilda's chances of taking the English throne?

Very significantly. As her campaign went on, she was criticised more and more in explicitly gendered ways. In 1141, just as Matilda was about to be crowned monarch of England, she was condemned for arranging things according to her own will, for not listening to her advisors and for beginning to walk and talk with authority. If she were a man, all of these criticisms would have sounded more like compliments.

The way to be an effective king in the 12th century was to be an authority figure. Being all wishy-washy was a sure path to disaster. This meant that Matilda was faced with an almost impossible dilemma: as soon as she acted like an authoritarian, she was criticised for not being womanly enough. But if she passively sat around with her embroidery being guided by her advisors, that would have been used as evidence that she was not tough enough to rule.

In a great feat of self-awareness, Matilda eventually realised she was never going to sit on the throne of England herself – in the mid-12th century, the concept of a woman



The wedding of a young Matilda to Henry V, Holy Roman Emperor. "She grabbed her opportunity with both hands," says Hanley

wielding authority on her own behalf was just too bizarre. So she changed tack, and declared that she was fighting on behalf of her son Henry, an ambition that was deemed much more palatable.

The civil war ended with a settlement that named Henry as Stephen's heir. Was that a victory, or a concession?

A bit of both. On the one hand, ensuring that the person who would succeed Stephen was her son, and not Stephen's, was a triumph. But the actual treaty was essentially a legal fudge in which Stephen adopted Henry as his son. This was a slap in the face for Matilda. After all her years of fighting to put her son on the throne, when Henry finally became king it was because he was 'Stephen's son'. Honestly, if I were her, I'd have wanted to put my fist through a wall.

How politically influential was Matilda as queen mother?

Of all the roles Matilda took on throughout her life, I would say that it was as queen mother that she was able to wield power most effectively. At the time the 21-year-old Henry was crowned as king of England, he was already Duke of Normandy, Count of Anjou and Duke of Aquitaine. That was a vast geographical area to be in charge of, and he couldn't possibly be in all of it at once. And so, Matilda acted as Duchess of Normandy. This was probably quite galling in some respects: she spent years trying to be recognised as queen of England and Duchess of Normandy in her own right, and now she was ruling it, but only on behalf of her son. But she was very, very good at it. Twelfth-century Normandy could be a difficult place, with barons starting private wars and the threat of France encroaching at the borders. But Matilda kept everything in hand.

She had a great deal of influence on her son and was a very sound advisor. For example, she persuaded Henry not to invade Ireland, because she believed he would be spreading himself far too thinly. That was definitely a good move. She also advised him against appointing his friend Thomas Becket as the archbishop of Canterbury. Considering how things turned out, he really should have listened to his mother.

How should history remember Matilda?

Over the years, the narrative has developed that Matilda came very close to taking the throne before she was revealed to be haughty, arrogant and unsuitable for the task, and that England was saved from the prospect of having a terrible woman in charge. But that doesn't sound right to me – crucially, I think that a lot of the descriptions of Matilda have got it wrong, specifically because she was a woman. Medieval chroniclers were generally clerical men who didn't come into contact with many women. They were up in arms about the idea of a woman demanding power in her own right.

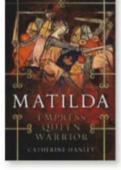
But although Matilda may not have achieved all her aims – and never managed to wear the English crown herself – she was able to hold on to her authority. Her legacy as a matriarch clearly inspired later generations, most notably her daughter-in-law Eleanor of Aquitaine. She also set a precedent that the crown could be passed through a female line, which would have significant consequences later on.

There aren't many unsuccessful claimants to the throne of England who have died peacefully in their beds in old age, while still

being recognised as a senior stateswoman of Europe. That's one hell of an achievement.

Matilda: Empress, Queen,

Matilda: Empress, Queen, Warrior by Catherine Hanley (Yale University Press, 296 pages, £20)



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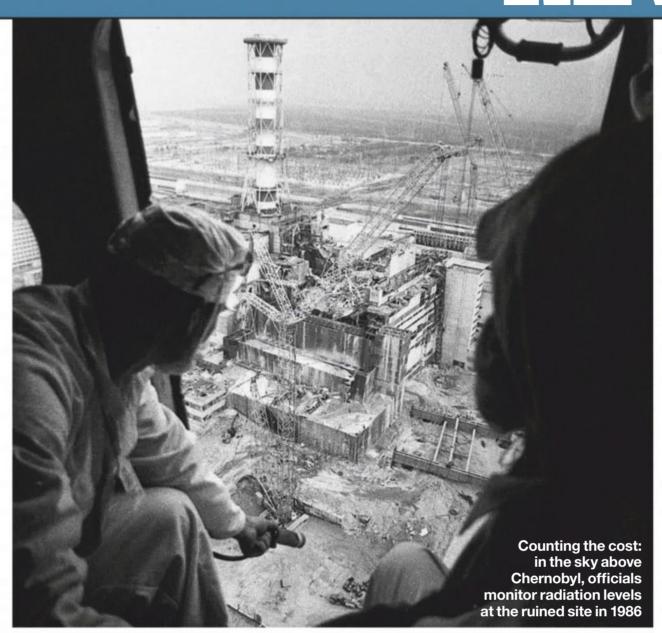
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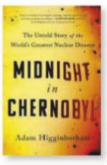


A system in meltdown

TAYLOR DOWNING recommends a harrowing account of how Chernobyl revealed wider failings in the Soviet Union

Midnight in Chernobyl: The Untold Story of the World's Greatest Nuclear Disaster

by Adam Higginbotham
Bantam Press, 560 pages, £20



In the 1950s and early 1960s, Soviet science reigned supreme, both in terms of the space race and in nuclear energy. The first nuclear power station in the world to provide

energy for the grid was opened at Obninsk in 1954, followed by many more. In a society without religion, scientists were gods.

In 1970, planning began for a huge new nuclear power plant at Chernobyl in north-west Ukraine. But by this time, Soviet technology had fallen far behind that of the west. The site was poorly constructed using shoddy materials. The reactors were badly designed. Nevertheless, building at Chernobyl was on a vast scale, to meet ludicrously ambitious planning targets. British journalist Adam Higginbotham traces the consequence of all this in his utterly gripping and superbly researched *Midnight in Chernobyl*.

Construction was under the control of the Orwellian-sounding Ministry of Medium Machine Building. This body had become obsessed with secrecy. Accidents were never reported and a major disaster in 1957 was kept secret for 30 years. Even worse, none of the lessons from this or other accidents

were passed on to designers and operators of future systems. Instead they became state secrets.

In the early morning of 26 April 1986, Reactor Four underwent a turbine generator test. The 'rundown unit' supposed to take over supplying power had been introduced at speed to meet a construction deadline and had never been tested. It failed and the puzzled operators tried to close the reactor down. This led to a chain reaction and a massive explosion that leaked hundreds of tonnes of radioactive materials. It took days for experts to realise the scale of the unprecedented disaster. Flying over the site, the reactor looked like a simmering volcano of uranium fuel and graphite that was impossible to extinguish. It would continue disgorging nuclear waste for weeks to come.

Higginbotham's account of what followed is compelling. The knee-jerk response of the authorities was to say nothing. Firefighters and engineers were sent on suicide missions to try to stop the blaze spreading. None were prepared to deal with a nuclear disaster of this magnitude. The people in the nearby town of Pripyat were given no warnings. It was later estimated that 17.5 million people were in the contamination zone below the highly radioactive clouds blowing across Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and then further north-west. Only when these clouds fell as rain in Sweden did the rest of the world discover the extent of the tragedy and Moscow was forced to reveal there had been an accident. Reluctantly, a small exclusion zone was declared. Over the following months, 116,000 local residents were evacuated.

Midnight in Chernobyl is based on interviews and the several investiga-

The knee-jerk response of the authorities to the Chernobyl disaster was to say nothing

AKG IMAGES



COMING SOON...

"In our next issue I'll be talking to Hallie Rubenhold about her new book *The Five*, which reconstructs the dark underbelly of Victorian London to uncover the stories of the women murdered by Jack the Ripper. Plus, there'll be reviews on appeasing the Nazis, US imperialism and women in Westminster."

Ellie Cawthorne, staff writer

tions into the disaster. Higginbotham also draws on memoirs, both published and unpublished. The science of nuclear reactors is complex, but the author makes it accessible. In doing so, he tells a harrowing story.

As engineers struggled to respond, the nightmare grew worse. Would there be a second chain reaction inside what was left of the reactor and an even bigger explosion? Would the burning radioactive lava penetrate the thick foundations and poison the water table of the Pripyat river which flowed into the Dnieper and supplied a vast, densely populated region? Meanwhile, around 30 survivors died in agony as radiation sickness caused their internal organs to disintegrate.

The tragedy at Chernobyl contributed to the collapse of the whole Soviet system that had created it

Higginbotham's book also explores the political and economic consequences of the disaster. A giant reinforced concrete structure was constructed over the remains of the reactor, known suitably as the Sarcophagus. Some 600,000 men and women were drafted in over the next few years to detoxify the region. The total bill for sorting out the disaster has been estimated at \$128bn.

Higginbotham argues persuasively that it was not incompetent operators at Chernobyl who were to blame for the disaster. It was a culture of secrecy, complacency and arrogance that made tragedy inevitable. It happened at the beginning of Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost*, 'openness'. Higginbotham shows brilliantly how the tragedy contributed to the collapse of the whole Soviet system that had created it.

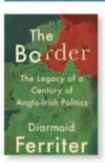
Taylor Downing writes on many aspects of 20th-century history. His latest book, *1983: The World at the Brink* (Little, Brown), was recently released in paperback

A divided island

cormacógráda welcomes an exploration of how the border between north and south has shaped modern Irish history

The Border: The Legacy of a Century of Anglo-Irish Politics

by Diarmaid Ferriter
Profile, 192 pages, £12.99



As the UK's only land border with the EU, Northern Ireland's border with the Republic of Ireland has been much in the news recently. Meandering for 310 miles across backroads,

and passing through farms and even houses, it could hardly be described as a natural border. With its 200-plus road crossings, and myriad twists and turns, it might have been designed by smugglers. Even during the Troubles, when the number of approved crossings was reduced to 20, smuggling went on.

Although there was never a clear faultline between a 'Catholic' south and a 'Protestant' north, the dividing line established in 1922 was a sectarian construct, a flawed recognition of conflicting loyalties. By opting for six of the island's 32 counties, Ulster's Unionists sacrificed unionists elsewhere in Ireland in order to "keep Ulster Protestant". On their own logic they got more than they deserved, since two of the counties, Fermanagh and Tyrone, had significant Catholic majorities.

Historian Diarmaid Ferriter is particularly interesting on the origins and early history of the border. As he highlights, the realpolitik that led Lloyd George to support the Unionists "only to the extent that we cannot allow civil war

to take place at our doors" cemented a border that caused less carnage and forced migration than most borders created in the wake of the First World War. That border gradually took on a life of its own, buttressed by tariffs, modest population transfers, divergent policies, southern neutrality during the Second World War and the IRA 'border campaign' of the 1950s/60s. But its porosity during the Troubles meant the British Army never quite subdued the IRA.

For Unionist leaders, the "people of Northern Ireland" always meant one side only. At the outset, Protestants outnumbered Catholics two to one, but today that primacy has been eroded. While Protestants still outnumber Catholics in Northern Ireland's population as a whole (although barely so), among those of school-going and working age, Catholics are in a majority.

The Good Friday Agreement of 1998, which led to the virtual abolition of the border, was an inspired compromise that recognised new political realities. Insofar as the two Irelands are concerned, the draft Brexit agreement proposed by Theresa May in November 2018 was in the same 'no winners' spirit: the nationalist-republican side, which voted remain, would be forced out of the EU; whereas the DUP would get its way on Brexit, but would lose its veto on the backstop. Other scenarios were deemed too grim to contemplate.

Ferriter's timely book explains all this and more, deftly interweaving history and current affairs.



Cormac Ó Gráda is professor emeritus, University College Dublin. His most recent book, co-edited with Guido Alfani, is *Famine in European History* (Cambridge, 2017)

A Garda officer mans the border between north and south at Donegal, 1985

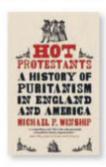


The Puritans' dilemma

ALECRYRIE considers a study of Puritanism that focuses on how its adherents wrestled endlessly with the idea of saving their compatriots

Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America

by Michael P Winship
Yale University Press, 368 pages, £20



In 1646, a Puritan preacher in Massachusetts told a group of Native Americans that, unfortunately, they were mired in barbarism, sin and ignorance. They digested this news and

then asked "whether English men were ever at any time so ignorant of God?"

We might expect the preacher to have reached back to Roman times for an answer. But instead, he replied that even in 1646, "There are two sorts of Englishmen: some are bad and naught, and live

wickedly... in a manner as ignorant of Jesus Christ as the Indians now are." Even after travelling across 3,000 miles of ocean, and finding themselves balanced on the edge of a wild, unmapped continent, the Puritans were still obsessed by their perpetual, irresolvable conflict with their own kin.

The Puritan dilemma, according to this authoritative book, was a cruel one. These self-described "hot Protestants" had, since the 1540s, been yearning impatiently for further Reformation.

Puritan ideals may have been illusions, but the costs of pursuing them were all too real Yet they insisted that they could not make that journey alone, but must take their whole nation with them.

At first, they were simply defeated by popular indifference and royal hostility. Then, worse, they began to succeed. In New England in the 1620s and 1630s they created godly cities "upon a hill"; found that no purity could ever be pure enough; and discovered that their children, born and raised in the colonies, could never be as godly as the generation who had chosen to leave everything to emigrate.

Meanwhile, in old England, victory in the Civil War brought Puritans to power but did not solve their problem. Should they drag the whole unwilling country into godliness with them, or strike out alone and abandon the idea of a national church? If they had been able to answer that, their republic might still be with us.

Michael P Winship tells an oceanspanning story with a light touch and an ear for compelling vignettes. He integrates the old and New England narratives powerfully, and keeps a sharp eye on the English Caribbean, but he might have given us more of other contexts where parallel dilemmas were resolved. Scotland, for example, embraced a much more unified Presbyterian national church.

The risk here is that we fall for the Puritan myth of the persecuted minority. In this context, the book bypasses emollient, unifying figures such as William Perkins, the giant of Elizabethan Puritanism, who worked with the grain of the establishment. Instead, Winship is drawn to the sirens of self-conscious division.

His story ends with the Glorious
Revolution, and New England's retreat
from theocracy – a transition that he
blames for the Salem witch trials of
1692–93, a "horrific fluke" in which
secular magistrates tried to use rough
tools to solve the preachers' traditional
problems. As old England had already
discovered, the ideals the Puritans were
pursuing may have been illusions, but
the costs of the effort were all too real.

Alec Ryrie, a professor at Durham University, is author of *Protestants: The Radicals who Made the Modern World* (William Collins, 2017)

BBC History Magazine

In 1937, Wallis Simpson and Edward visited Nazi Germany and met Adolf Hitler, a trip undertaken against the advice of the British government

Divisive figure

SARAH GRISTWOOD isn't entirely convinced by a biography that reassesses the life and times of Wallis Simpson

Untitled: The Real Wallis Simpson, Duchess of Windsor

by Anna Pasternak William Collins, 368 pages, £20



Anna Pasternak is a brave woman. *Untitled* is pitched as the first positive biography of Wallis Simpson, the woman we love to hate. The adventuress who stole

our king away, the Wicked Witch of the West dressed by Mainbocher – and Dior, and Saint Laurent, and Givenchy...

Wallis undoubtedly did Britain a favour in causing the erratic Edward VIII to be replaced by his dutiful brother Bertie. Noel Coward even said that every town in England should erect a statue to her. All the same, Pasternak has her work cut out if she hopes to rewrite the usual narrative of this fascinating royal story.

Pasternak's villains are the palace people bound by their prejudices, and the politicians seizing on Mrs Simpson as means to oust a problematic king. Her Wallis is above all a victim and one whose royal fling was never meant to disrupt her marriage to the long-suffering Ernest Simpson.

It was only her lover's scalp-prickling neediness that saw Wallis stranded in a situation she had provoked. She was "like an animal in a trap" and begged the new king not to abdicate, but rather to set her free. "You and I would only create disaster together," she wrote to him.

So far, so fair, perhaps. But there are a hefty body of charges against both Edward and Wallis, and Pasternak's eager partisanship is not enough to refute them. The idea that Wallis ensnared Edward with sexual tricks learned in eastern brothels can perhaps safely be dismissed in a few sentences; the

A key issue is the Windsors' sympathy for Nazi Germany



question of whether the pair had dangerous fascist leanings, less so.

The key issue is whether the Windsors' sympathy for Nazi Germany continued, treasonously, into the war years. Pasternak castigates the royal family for believing slurs about the duchess's loyalty, rather than considering "hard and consistent evidence to the contrary". But she does not herself produce any real evidence to take the suspicion away. Meanwhile, unlike Anne Sebba's not unsympathetic *That Woman*, she doesn't offer social context over why it was so unthinkable for the king to marry a risque divorcee.

In one sense, however, Pasternak does achieve her goal of winning sympathy for (making a point of giving

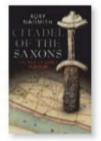
Capital gains

THOMAS PICKLES is impressed by an account of how London rose to become England's pre-eminent city

Citadel of the Saxons: The Rise of Early London

by Rory Naismith

IB Tauris & Co, 256 pages, £20



London is now the dominant city in Britain. In this impeccably researched, engagingly written and handsomely presented book, Rory Naismith sets out to

discover why and how this came about, focusing on the period from AD 400 to 1066. This focus is not unprecedented.

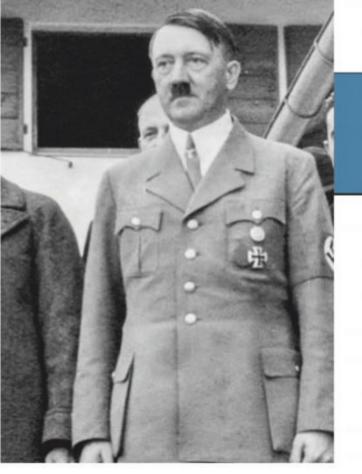
From the 1890s on, murals depicting the city's history were commissioned for the Royal Exchange, emphasising Alfred the Great (reigned 871–99) and William the Conqueror (r1066–87) as influential founding fathers.

Nevertheless, the focus here is unusual and the argument is original, albeit the outlines of the story are well understood. Roman Londinium ceased to be a city in the fifth century, but retained a physical presence and remained a status symbol. In the seventh century a trading centre, Lundenwic, developed to the west of Londinium, around the Strand. During

conflicts between the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings in the ninth century Lundenwic declined and Londinium was refortified, becoming Lundenburh. In the 10th century, Lundenburh became a town, with a mint, a market and guilds.

Within this over-arching narrative,
Naismith expertly combines written
sources with archaeological evidence
to provide a wealth of detail on what
life was like. Moreover, he successfully
presents a new model for the origins of
London. The legacy of Londinium meant
that Lundenwic and Lundenburh lay at
the heart of a communication network,
even if they had much in common with
other trading sites and forts. Post-Roman
political developments placed them
between several peoples and their
kingdoms – especially the Kentish
people, the West Saxons, the Mercians,

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Pay it forward

LAURENCE TOTELIN enjoys an evocative account of how
learning from the ancient world was passed down the years

The Map of Knowledge: How Classical Ideas Were Lost and Found: A History in Seven Cities

by Violet Moller

Picador, 336 pages, £20



In Constantinople in AD 512 the imperial princess Anicia Juliana was presented with a stunningly illustrated manuscript. It contained several Greek texts,

including Dioscorides' important pharmacological treatise, *De materia medica*, a text that dates from the first century AD. This manuscript remained in Constantinople for around 1,000 years, but in the 16th century it passed to the Holy Roman Empire and has since been kept in Vienna, hence its nickname of 'Vienna Dioscorides'. Its owners over the centuries annotated the manuscript in Greek, Arabic and Hebrew.

The 'Vienna Dioscorides' makes a few appearances in Violet Moller's exciting new book, which will appeal to anyone interested in the transmission of knowledge over time and space. Starting in the Hellenistic period (323–31 BC) and ending around AD 1500, Moller takes us on a journey around seven significant centres of learning: Alexandria, Baghdad, Córdoba, Toledo, Salerno, Palermo and Venice. On this odyssey, we encounter a cast of fascinating characters and still more exciting ideas, but the focus

is loosely on the transmission of three key bodies of work: Euclid on mathematics, Ptolemy on

A detail from the 'Vienna Dioscorides', a text that helped preserve Greek learning in pharmacology astronomy and astrology, and Galen on medicine. We learn how the ideas of these thinkers survived through changes in book production (from papyrus scroll, to parchment codex, to printed book), through translation into various languages (Greek, Syriac, Arabic and Latin), and through major religious changes that saw the birth and spread of both Christianity and Islam.

WANT MORE?

For interviews with authors of the latest books, check out our

Moller's great mosaic is full of nuance. She attempts whenever she can to stress the contribution of overlooked figures, especially women. Cleopatra and Hypatia are named, but anonymous herbalist women are acknowledged for their significant contribution to medicine. At times, Moller presents her facts with a little too much confidence. For instance, while she acknowledges that there is little evidence on Euclid's life, she assuredly places him under the reign of Ptolemy I when nothing is less certain. She also misses some opportunities for a good anecdote. Thus, she could have stressed that the original title of Ptolemy's Almagest was Mathēmatikē Syntaxis ('Mathematical Systematic Treatise'). *Almagest* is the work's Arabic title, where 'magest' is a corrupted form of the Greek word for 'greatest', megistē."

Those quibbles aside, Moller's writing is so evocative that you almost feel the papyrus, vellum and paper she lovingly depicts. In her preface, Moller recounts how she was awakened to the theme of her book as a 21-year-old travelling to

Palermo with a friend. Around the same age, I made a similar trip and was told by our hotel host: "If I visited Palermo for the first time, I would fall in love." Similarly, Moller invites us to fall in love with her subject.

Laurence Totelin is a lecturer in ancient history at Cardiff University

Wallis the HRH title she was denied in life) "Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Windsor". Whatever her sins, Wallis Simpson surely paid for them in those long years of exile. "A woman always pays the most," she had written, prophetically.

Pasternak's book was consciously written at a moment when another royal prince has married another American divorcee. Perhaps the real lesson to take from it is a warning against casting famous women as either sinners or saints, as media and public alike do all too readily.

Sarah Gristwood's books on royal history include *Elizabeth: The Queen and the Crown* (Pavilion, 2017)

and the East Saxons – and this produced particularly good conditions for trade.

The creation of an English kingdom and national administrative framework in the 10th century, followed by renewed Viking raiding, meant that Lundenburh became a prominent administrative centre under Kings Æthelred II (reigned 978–1016) and Cnut (r1016–35). It created coin dies for the kingdom and its own mint was the most productive in the kingdom.

Quite apart from the intrinsic interest, this is a timely reminder that the prominence of London was historically contingent rather than inevitable.

Thomas Pickles lectures at the University of Chester. He is the author of *Kingship*, *Society* and the Church in Anglo-Saxon Yorkshire (Oxford University Press, 2018)

AKG IMAGES



A view of Stockholm painted by Elias Martin (1739–1818). In *The Wolf and the Watchman* readers are shown a city of "disease, dirt and drunkenness"

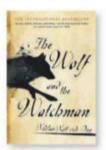
FICTION

Dead in the water...

NICK RENNISON is gripped by a dark historical novel that follows a murder investigation in 18th-century Sweden

The Wolf and the Watchman

by Niklas Natt och Dag John Murray, 416 pages, £12.99



As an antidote to nostalgia about the not-so-distant past, this darkly compelling crime novel is unbeatable. There is no room for any idea of the so-called

good old days in Niklas Natt och Dag's grim but potent reconstruction of late 18th-century Sweden.

The year is 1793. Revolution is under way in France, and though its ideas of equality and liberty have begun to filter northwards, Stockholm remains a bleak place. Poverty, disease, dirt and drunkenness stalk its streets. The state is run for the benefit of the few, not the many.

One morning, a watchman, Mickel Cardell, fishes a limbless torso out of one of the city's bodies of water. Investigator Cecil Winge is given the job of uncovering the dead man's identity and cause of death. He takes on Cardell as his assistant. Both men are damaged souls.

The watchman lost his arm in conflict and is haunted by his wartime experiences. Winge is dying of consumption. He retains a faith in the idea of justice, but not the likelihood of achieving it.

Together they set out to give a name to the anonymous, mutilated corpse and catch whoever inflicted such suffering on him. Their quest for the truth demands that they confront the darkest elements of human nature.

The Wolf and the Watchman is not a novel for the squeamish. It forces us to acknowledge the worst that men are capable of doing. However, its cleverly constructed narrative, which moves back in time to reveal the circumstances surrounding the murder, before returning to Cardell and Winge's investigation and its savagely ironic conclusion, seizes the reader's attention.

This debut novel has been a bestseller in the author's native Sweden, and there is no reason why it should not do just as well in the UK.

Nick Rennison is the author of *Carver's Truth* (Corvus, 2016)

THREE MORE DARK TALES FROM THE BALTIC

The Czar's Madman

Jaan Kross (1992)



Baron Timotheus von Bock, an early 19th-century Estonian nobleman, is an idealist with faith in the equality of all men. Von Bock believes that Russia's tsar, then ruler

over Estonia, will listen when he tells him of the injustices in his realm. Far from listening, the tsar assumes von Bock is insane and has him incarcerated. This is an engrossing, complex novel by Estonia's greatest 20th-century writer.

The Visit of the Royal Physician

Per Olov Enquist (2002)

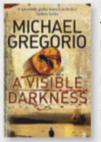


Sister to George III, Caroline Mathilde is married to Christian VII, the mentally unstable king of 1770s Denmark. The royal physician, Johann Friedrich Struensee, becomes

her ally in the intrigues and infighting at court, and eventually her lover. In Enquist's powerful evocation of a world in which the personal and the political intertwine, Struensee attempts to introduce reforms to the backward realm, but his enemies seize upon his relationship with Caroline to destroy him.

A Visible Darkness

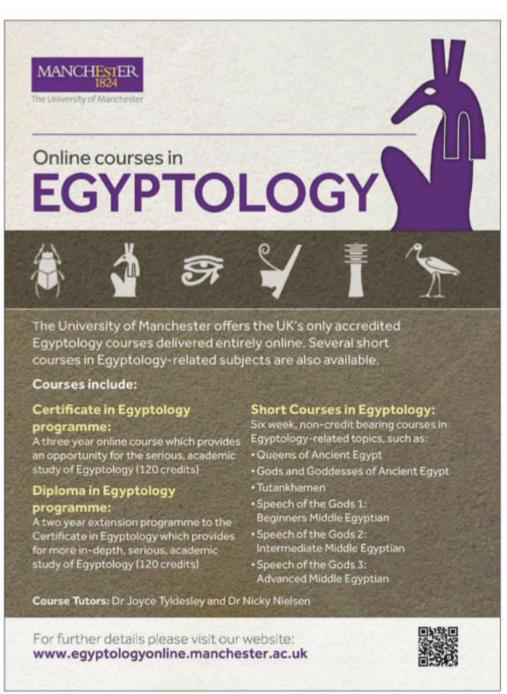
Michael Gregorio (2010)



Hanno Stiffeniis, former pupil of the philosopher Immanuel Kant, is a Prussian magistrate during the Napoleonic era. He is summoned to the Baltic coast where

the body of a young woman, naked and mutilated, has been found. As more women who work gathering amber are murdered, Stiffeniis must use all his skills to track down the killer. Gregorio combines a cleverly twisting plot with rich historical detail in an absorbing crime novel.

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Stephen Lawrence was murdered in a racist attack in 1993

TV&RADIO



Policing the police

Macpherson: What Happened Next?

Radio Radio 4

Scheduled for Monday 11 March

In April 1993, a black teenager, Stephen Lawrence, was murdered in a racist attack in the London suburb of Eltham. The Metropolitan Police bungled the investigation into his killers, and the inquiry that followed, led by Sir William Macpherson, produced one of the most damning documents ever to emerge from the British establishment.

Twenty years on, barrister and broadcaster Hashi Mohamed examines what's changed since the Macpherson report was published.



Behind closed doors

Private Lives

TV Yesterday

Scheduled for March

After series devoted solely to the Tudors and to British royals, Tracy Borman widens her remit to take in the personal lives of some of history's more notable characters. These include Peter the Great, a man who was fascinated by developments in Enlightenment-era Europe and whose efforts to drag Russia towards modernity included taxing beards.

The series also explores how Al Capone, for all the violence he orchestrated in Prohibition-era America, was capable of tenderness at home.

Documentaries about Edward VIII,

Napoleon Bonaparte, Princess Margaret and Adolf Hitler complete the series.

Prevailing attitudes

Liza Williams tells us about her series exploring why it took so long to catch Peter Sutcliffe

The Yorkshire Ripper Files: A Very British Crime Story

TV BBC Four

Scheduled for March

In May 1981, lorry driver Peter Sutcliffe, the 'Yorkshire Ripper', was convicted of murdering 13 women and attempting to kill seven others. But how did a man questioned nine times during the investigation into his crimes evade capture for six years?

A new series by filmmaker Liza Williams approaches Sutcliffe's crimes from a new perspective. "The series is about how entrenched attitudes towards women, and those who were involved in prostitution in particular, influenced the investigation, and society's reaction to the crimes," says Williams.

"We've combed through various reports and documents that catalogue how the investigation unfolded. It's interesting looking at this with modern eyes, because you see things that contemporaries might not have picked up on, regarding attitudes to women."

As well as archive footage, the series also features new interviews with police officers, victims and their families, and journalists. In the case of reporters, says Williams, "female journalists often saw the crimes very differently". She adds: "It was really enlightening to hear how the media's attitude to the police investigation changed. At the beginning there was very little criticism of the police, but by late 1980 it was a very different story."

One of the problems with the cases was the sheer amount of information that was gathered, yet this doesn't exonerate the police from criticism. As the government-commissioned Byford Report (1982, made public in 2006) made clear, organisational failings undermined the investigation by the West Yorkshire Police. "A huge amount of paperwork had amassed over the five-year investigation period, and the system of cross-referencing this information became completely ineffectual," notes Williams.

The filmmaker says she is immensely grateful to those who gave interviews, some of whom are speaking for the first time. "The case has cast a shadow over everyone involved, and the trauma for loved ones never goes away," she says. "It was a privilege to speak to relatives who felt able to open up about what happened. But for many it is still too difficult to talk about."







Priscilla Garrick (played by Keeley Hawes, left) and Feef Symonds (Emma Appleton) in Channel 4's gripping new spy drama, *Traitors*

In the wake of conflict

Traitors

TV Channel 4
Scheduled for February

The birth of the postwar consensus wasn't entirely untroubled. In 1945, Britain was exhausted, yet as Winston Churchill was swept from power in July, huge decisions about the future of the country and its empire had to be made.

Created by writer Bash Doran (Boardwalk Empire, Masters of Sex), the six-part Traitors takes viewers back to this period, which we see through the eyes of bold, 20-something Feef Symonds (Emma Appleton), who joins

the civil service as Clement Attlee's Labour administration takes office following a landslide election victory.

Symonds' ambition is a puzzle to her family, and then there's her American lover, Peter. With the Americans worried that British socialism may play into Soviet hands as the country redefines its place in the world, he persuades Symonds to spy on her own government. As you might expect, this leads to some tricky situations.

A strong supporting cast includes Keeley Hawes (*Bodyguard*, *Line of Duty*) and Michael Stuhlbarg (*The Shape of Water*, *The Post* and *Boardwalk Empire*).

Inner space

First Man

DVD (Universal Pictures UK, cert 12)

Anyone trying to work out what motivated Neil Armstrong, and what qualities propelled him to the front of the overachievers' queue, invariably hits the same problem. For a man so unimaginably famous, Armstrong (played here by Ryan Gosling) was a remarkably elusive character.

From a script by Josh Singer (The Post), director Damien Chazelle's drama tackles this difficulty by focusing on the 1960s. In 1962, Armstrong's two-year-old daughter, Karen, died of cancer.
While the drama

never makes it clear whether grief drove Armstrong, or if something vital in him was cauterised by loss, it links his calmness under pressure to this trauma.

And the pressure points in Armstrong's professional life were extreme. The Apollo programme tested mid-20th-century technology to destruction. Sometimes with tragic results, as when we're shown the crew of Apollo 1 dying in a fire.

The film builds to Armstrong's 'giant leap', but there's no sense of resolution.

Rather, as we see
Armstrong in isolation
after his mission,
unable to touch the
hand of his wife,
Janet (Claire Foy),
there's a lingering
sense his whole life
was like this.

Ryan Gosling plays the unimaginably famous but remarkably elusive Neil Armstrong

ALSO LOOK OUT FOR...

TV & RADIO UPDATES A historyextra com/topic/tv-and-radio

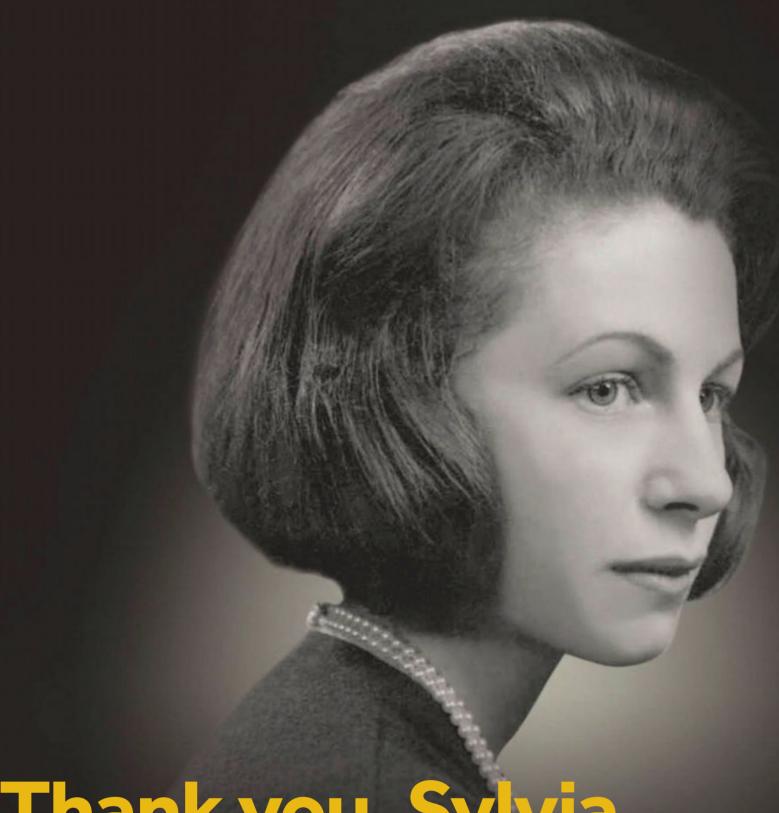
Antarah ibn Shaddad stars in the latest series of *In Our Time*

One of the recurring strengths of **In Our Time** (Radio 4) is the way it alerts listeners to characters from history we really should know more about. The episode devoted to sixth-century pre-Islamic knight and poet Antarah ibn Shaddad (Thursday 28 February) may well fall into this category. Listen out too for an episode about Queen Elizabeth I's advisor William Cecil (Thursday 7 March), where the expert quests include Diarmaid MacCulloch. Another upcoming highlight on Radio 4 is a new adaptation of A Passage to India (Monday 11 March), EM Forster's masterpiece exploring life in the British Raj.

Storyville: Under the Wire (BBC Four, February) looks back at Sunday Times war correspondent Marie Colvin and photographer Paul Conroy's mission to Homs, Syria in February 2012. It was an assignment that left Colvin dead after artillery fire hit an international media centre. A US court recently found the Syrian government liable for her killing.

Highlights on PBS America include **The Circus** (Tuesday 26 February), which takes as its starting point the intertwining stories of impresarios such as PT Barnum. Meanwhile, **Decoding Watson** (Tuesday 12 March) explores the work of molecular biologist, geneticist and zoologist James Watson, one of those who won a Nobel Prize for putting forward the idea of the double helix structure of DNA.

BBC History Magazine



Thank you, Sylvia

Sylvia left a gift in her Will to help conquer Stroke

The first we knew of Sylvia was when we received notification of the gift she'd left us in her Will. Shortly after, a beautiful story of a much-loved woman began to unfurl.

Friends remembered Sylvia's kindheart and her wish to help others. She spent part of her adult-life caring for her mother, and developed a passion

for medicine. Becoming a medical secretary was her next step and, in the course of her career, she discovered the devastating impact a stroke could have on people and their families. She saw that research and treatment were vastly under-funded, and she decided to remember the Stroke Association in her Will.

Sylvia's gift has helped fund our work to conquer stroke. She's supported research to prevent and treat stroke, and she's helped care for survivors. And that's something you can do too in the same way.

If you would like to learn more about remembering the Stroke Association in your Will, please get in touch.

Call 020 75661505 email legacy@stroke.org.uk or visit stroke.org.uk/legacy

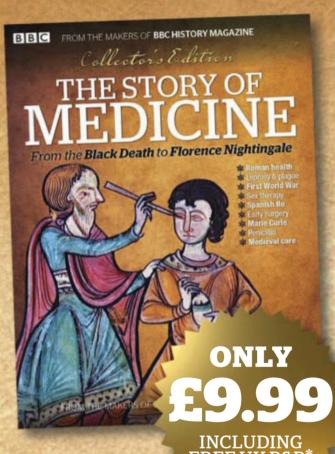




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FIVE THINGS TO DO IN MARCH

CHOICE



Style and substance

EXHIBITION

Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams

V&A, London **Until 14 July 2019**

2 020 7942 2000

vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/dior-designer-of-dreams he history and impact of one of the 20th century's

most influential fashion designers, and the six artistic directors who have succeeded him, is under the spotlight at the V&A this month. Spanning the years from 1947 to the present day, the exhibition – the largest and most comprehensive ever staged in the UK on the House of Dior – explores the enduring influence of the fashion label. More than 500 objects are on show across 11 exhibition sections. Among these items are more than

200 rare haute couture garments, which are placed alongside accessories, fashion photography, film, vintage perfume, original make-up, illustrations, magazines and Christian Dior's personal possessions. The exhibition also examines Dior's creative collaborations with British manufacturers including Dents (gloves), Rayne (shoes), Lyle & Scott (knitwear) and Mitchel Maer (costume jewellery).

Highlights from the exhibition include the Christian Dior dress worn by Princess Margaret for her 21st birthday celebrations in 1951 (pictured right), as well as original sketches by Dior himself and items worn by high-profile clients including the novelist and journalist Nancy Mitford and the ballet dancer Margot Fonteyn.



Cecil Beaton's photograph of Princess Margaret on her 21st birthday, wearing a specially designed gown by Christian Dior

EXHIBITION

Viking: Rediscover the Legend **Norwich Castle Museum**

& Art Gallery **Until 8 September 2019**

2 01603 493625

museums.norfolk.gov.uk

Featuring objects from the British Museum and Yorkshire Museum, this exhibition explores how Vikings shaped many aspects of life in Britain. Among the items on show is the Anglo-Saxon York Helmet, the most significant treasure of its kind ever found in the UK.

EXHIBITION

Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Making the Glasgow Style Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool 15 March-26 August 2019

2 0151 478 4199

• liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ walker/exhibitions/mackintosh

> Spanning the lifetime of Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), this exhibition uses around 250 objects to explore the movement that became known as 'the Glasgow Style'.

EXHIBITION

Conscience Matters National War Museum, **Edinburgh Castle, Edinburgh** 8 March-26 January 2020

2 0300 123 6789

nms.ac.uk/consciencematters

British conscientious objectors of the Second World War are the focus of this exhibition, which explores the reasons people had for opposing conscription and what happened to them as a result. The personal stories of conscientious objectors such as Scottish author Fred Urquhart and poet Edwin Morgan will be examined through paintings, poems, letters, music and speeches.

EXHIBITION / FREE ENTRY

The Anatomy of Melancholv Bethlem Museum of the Mind, Beckenham, Kent

Until 27 April 2019

museumofthemind.org.uk

This exhibition explores how the causes and cures of 'melancholia' - proposed in the 17th-century book The Anatomy of Melancholy - are reflected across the museum's art collections. Many of the works, including 19th-century examples by Jonathan Martin and Richard Dadd, echo the causes of the condition set out in the frontispiece of Robert Burton's famous tome.



The Anglo-Saxon York Helmet, made of iron and brass, was found in 1982

Historical

HOLIDAYS & HOTELS

See below a selection of hotels and holidays, giving you opportunities to stay and soak up some history



River Retreats

Waternimf, built 1906, is a unique family owned floating hotel on the Great Ouse. Centred in the historical city of Ely, the barge includes five delightful en-suite double cabins. Previously a cargo carrier, she now offers either the opportunity to unwind and relax onboard in Ely or perhaps cruise and explore the Fens.

riverretreats.co.uk // 07534 041738



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Aikwood Tower in the Scottish Borders is a grade A-listed traditional Peel Tower (fortified keep) abounding with 500 years of Scottish history and medieval castle charm. It has been sensitively restored and renovated to create warm and welcoming luxury self-catering holiday accommodation for ten guests.

aikwoodtower.com // 01750 700 500





The Harpy Houseboat, Tower Bridge

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theharpy.com // 07836 262222



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hiddenhistory.co.uk // 0121 444 1854



Boringdon Hall Hotel

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boringdonhall.co.uk // 01752 344455

UNDISCOVERED MUSEUMS

Explore the fascinating collections and displays available throughout the UK in this collections of museums that you may not have yet discovered



The Old Operating Theatre

Housed in the attic of the early eighteenth-century church of the old St Thomas' Hospital, this atmospheric museum offers a unique insight into the history of medicine and surgery. The original timber framed Herb Garret was once used to dry and store herbs for patients' medicines and in 1822 an operating theatre was included. Predating anaesthetics and antiseptics, it is the oldest surviving surgical theatre in Europe.

020 7188 2679 | oldoperatingtheatre.com



Gatwick Aviation Museum

The Gatwick Aviation Museum has a unique collection of British aircraft from the "golden age" of British aircraft manufacture. From the end of WWII until the 1970s British aircraft designers produced some of the most innovative and advanced aircraft of the day.

01293 862417 | gatwick-aviation-museum.co.uk



Handel & Hendrix in London

Separated by a wall and 200 years are the homes of two musicians who chose London and changed music. 25 Brook Street is the house that belonged to George Frideric Handel, where he composed some of the world's most enduring music. On the top floor of 23 Brook Street is the flat where Jimi Hendrix lived with his girlfriend, record player and guitar.



The New Room, John Wesley's Chapel

Discover the fascinating lives of John and Charles Wesley and learn more about 18th century Methodism and its relevance today. Visit 12 interactive rooms, including John's study and bedroom. Highlights include early membership records and personal items belonging to the Wesley brothers. Open Mon-Sat, 10.30am-4pm. Admission prices apply to the museum.

0117 9264740 | newroombristol.org.uk



Sir Richard Arkwright's Cromford Mills

Discover Sir Richard Arkwright's Cromford Mills, nestled in the beautifully scenic Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. Built in 1771 to house the first water-powered cotton spinning mill, history comes to life at the birthplace of the modern factory system. Immersive tours, The Arkwright Experience, Cafés, Nature trails, Historic Village and more.

01629 823256 | cromfordmills.org.uk



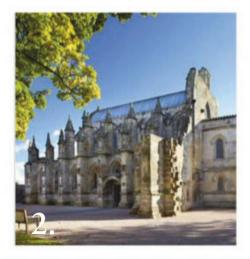
Weston Museum

Set in the distinctive historic building of the former Weston Gas Light Company, discover the diverse North Somerset Collection from the surrounding area. With free entry, changing exhibitions and events programme, this family friendly museum caters for all ages. Café & gift shop on-site.

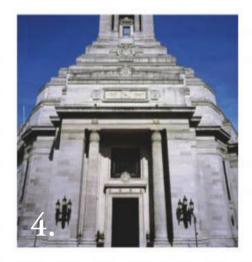
01934 621028 | westonmuseum.org

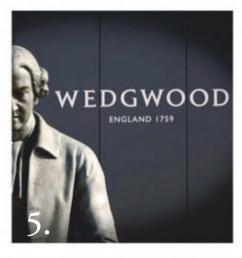
Spring Heritage Collection

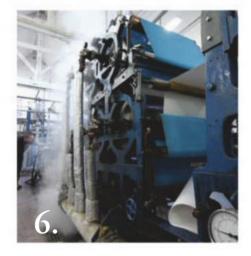




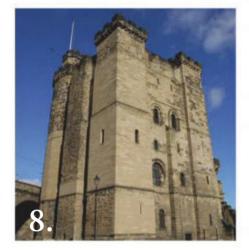




















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bamburghcastle.com | 01668 214515

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5. WEDGWOOD MUSEUM

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worldofwedgwood.com

9. NEWARK TOWN HALL MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

Fascinating architectural gem designed in 1776 by John Carr. A working Town Hall that also contains a museum within its beautiful Georgian rooms

newarktownhallmuseum.co.uk

2. ROSSLYN CHAPEL

Founded in 1446, the beauty of its setting and its ornate stonework have inspired and attracted visitors for generations. Just seven miles south of Edinburgh, with good transport links, Rosslyn Chapel is open all year.

rosslynchapel.com | 0131 440 2159

6. FROGMORE MILL, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

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thepapertrail.org.uk | 01442 234600

10. NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

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nam.ac.uk | 020 7730 0717

3. BENTLEY PRIORY MUSEUM

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bentleypriorymuseum.org.uk | 020 8950 5526

7. CANTERBURY TALES

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info@canterburytales.org.uk | 01227 696002

11. LITTLEHAMPTON MUSEUM

Visit Littlehampton Museum to explore our interactive galleries and exhibitions, showcasing the rich history of our stretch of sunny Sussex coastline. Free admission and fully accessible all year round.

littlehamptonmuseum.co.uk | 01903 738100

4. LIBRARY AND MUSEUM OF FREEMASONRY

Discover three centuries of English freemasonry in a unique museum situated in one of London's most spectacular Art Deco buildings.

www.freemasonry.london.museum

8. NEWCASTLE CASTLE

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newcastlecastle.co.uk | 0191 230 6300

12. CHRISTINA ROSSETTI: VISION & VERSE

Christina Rossetti: Vision & Verse considers the Victorian poet's complex attitude to visual art, recognising the enduring appeal of her verse to artists from the 1850s to the present day. On until 17 March.

info@wattsgallery.org.uk | 01483 810235





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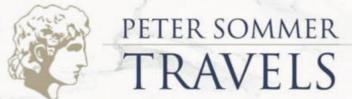


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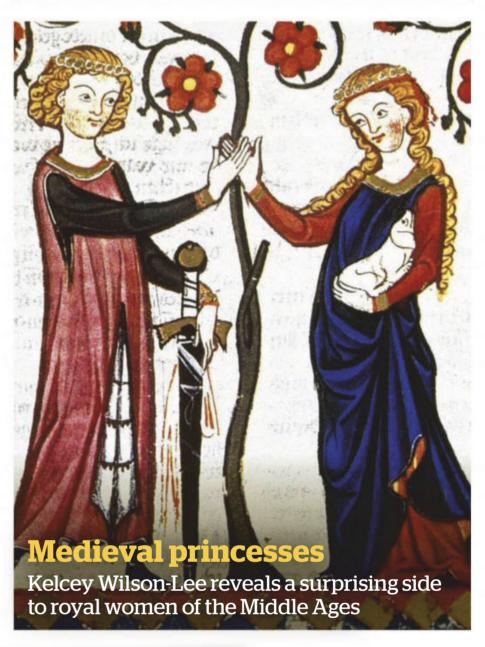




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NEXTMONTH

APRIL ISSUE ON SALE 21 MARCH 2019





Great escape?

Guy Walters asks whether the breakout from Stalag Luft III was a risk worth taking

Amritsar massacre

Kim Wagner examines the 1919 killings, which helped to undermine British imperial rule in India

Small faces

Elizabeth Goldring highlights some stunning miniatures from the Tudor era



ALAMY

QUIZ

BY JULIAN HUMPHRYS

Try your hand at this month's history quiz

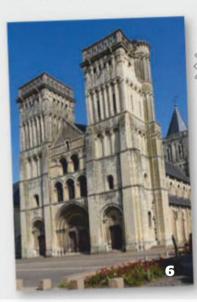
1. Which 12th-century mystic and polymath was known as the Sibyl of the Rhine?



2. What links
Maurice Bavaud,
Georg Elser (left)
and Rudolf von
Gertsdorff?

3. When it opened in 1937 it was the longest of its type in the world. What was it?

- **4.** On 1 January 1892, 17-year-old Annie Moore from County Cork became the first of 12 million people to pass through this place. What was it?
- **5.** Which British king's funeral was attended by Caesar?
- **6.** Which queen of England is buried here?



ONLINE QUIZZES historyextra.com /quiz

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1. Hildegard of Bingen.
- 2. They all planned to assassinate Adolf Hitler.
- **3.** The Golden Gate suspension bridge, San Francisco, California.
- 4. The Ellis Island immigration station, New York.
- **5.** Edward VII. Caesar was his wire fox terrier dog.
- **6.** Matilda of Flanders, the wife of William the Conqueror. It is the Abbaye aux Dames, Caen.

<u>GOT A QUESTION?</u>

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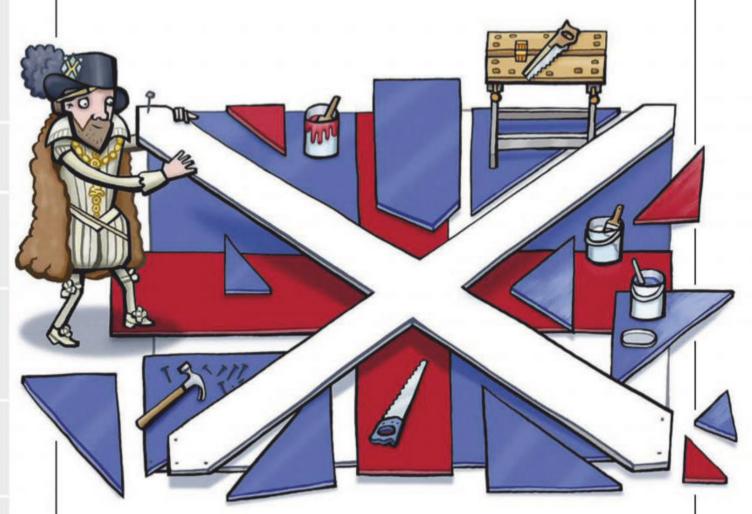


ILLUSTRATION BY GLEN MCBETH

Q What happened in Scotland when James VI became king of England and departed for London?

Susan Cunningham, by email

In reality, not very much. The death of Elizabeth Tudor and the subsequent accession of James VI of Scotland to the English throne (as James I) had long been anticipated. Although Elizabeth refused to name her successor, and there were other potential claimants, James's descent from the marriage of his great-grandfather James IV to Henry VII's daughter, Margaret, gave him the most convincing title. His trip from Edinburgh to London in 1603 became something of a triumphal procession, as English relief at an undisputed succession combined with James's own delight at coming at last into his English inheritance.

As for his native kingdom, in the short term nothing changed. While James initially promoted ideas of a closer Anglo-Scottish union, adopting the title 'king of Great Britain' and inventing a new union flag (the origins of today's Union Jack), there was little appetite in either Scotland or England for this British agenda.

While there was no longer a royal court in Edinburgh, the Scottish privy council, parliament, church and legal system all remained wholly separate and distinct. From a Scottish perspective, therefore, 1603 marked a union of the crowns, but not the kingdoms. How James and his Stuart successors subsequently managed – or mismanaged – their 'multiple monarchy' is another question altogether!

Roger Mason is professor of Scottish history at the University of St Andrews

SAMANTHA'S RECIPE CORNER



Every issue, picture editor **Samantha Nott** brings you a recipe from the past. This month it's an ancient dessert, said to have been eaten on the ark

Asure (Noah's pudding)

According to legend, as the waters receded and food stocks ran low on the ark, Noah threw all the remaining food into a pot and hoped for the best. The result, if legends are to be believed, is Asure, one of history's oldest desserts. Today, the dish is eaten by Shia Muslims on the day of Ashura - when sacrifices made by the Prophet's family for the sake of mankind are remembered. There are many variations of Asure, and the dish has the added bonus of using up store cupboard leftovers.

INGREDIENTS

130g pearled spelt (soaked overnight in water) 100g tinned chickpeas 70g pudding rice 250ml skimmed milk 350ml water 1 tbsp honey 1½ tsp orange blossom water Small pinch ground cinnamon 60g mixture of walnuts, pistachios and hazelnuts (finely chopped) 5 dried dates (finely chopped) 3 figs (finely chopped) 20g sultanas

Almond slices, pomegranate seeds and pomegranate molasses to serve (optional)

METHOD

Place the pre-soaked spelt, chickpeas and pudding rice into a medium sized pan with the milk and water. Stir well and bring to the boil. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring regularly.

Stir in the honey, orange blossom water and cinnamon. Simmer for another 10 minutes, stirring regularly until spelt and rice are cooked. Add more water for a thinner texture.

Take off the heat and fold in dried fruit and nuts. Taste for sweetness, adding more honey if desired. Serve at room temperature. Scatter with pomegranate seeds, almonds and pomegranate molasses.

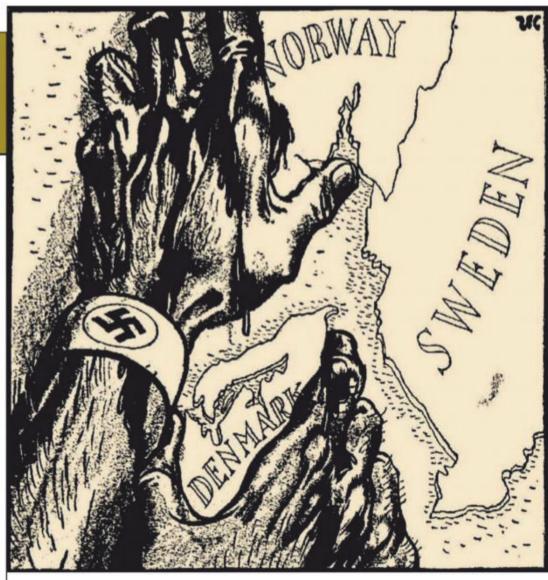
VERDICT

"Very sumptuous! Packed full of dates and nuts"

Difficulty: 3/10 Time: 30 mins

Recipe from The Greedy Wordsmith greedywordsmith.com





A cartoon from 1940 entitled "He calls it protection!" depicts Hitler's invasion of Denmark and Norway, while Sweden remains unoccupied

Q During the Second World War, why was Sweden not invaded like Denmark and Norway?

Gary Higginbottom, by email

Though all three Scandinavian nations declared neutrality at the start of the Second World War, only Sweden was able to escape German occupation, while Norway and Denmark were invaded and occupied. The reasons for this difference are essentially economic and strategic. Firstly, economics: Sweden was Germany's most important supplier of iron ore, which was crucial for Hitler's armaments industry, and while that supply was maintained then Swedish neutrality could be respected by Berlin. After all, a military occupation cost money, men and materiel, and was therefore best avoided if it wasn't strictly necessary.

The fate of Norway and Denmark, meanwhile, was decided more by strategic and logistical concerns. The German invasion of Norway in April 1940 was carried out to head off a planned Anglo-French occupation of that country, which aimed to deny Germany the strategically vital Norwegian coast and disrupt that crucial supply of Swedish iron ore. The occupation of Denmark was more logistical in origin. Though it certainly benefited Germany to control the Skagerrak and Kattegat straits and thereby the western access to the Baltic Sea, the primary rationale behind the invasion was simply that control of Denmark made the invasion and occupation of Norway easier to carry out.

Roger Moorhouse is an author and historian. His books include *The Devil's Alliance: Hitler's Pact with Stalin* (Vintage, 2016)

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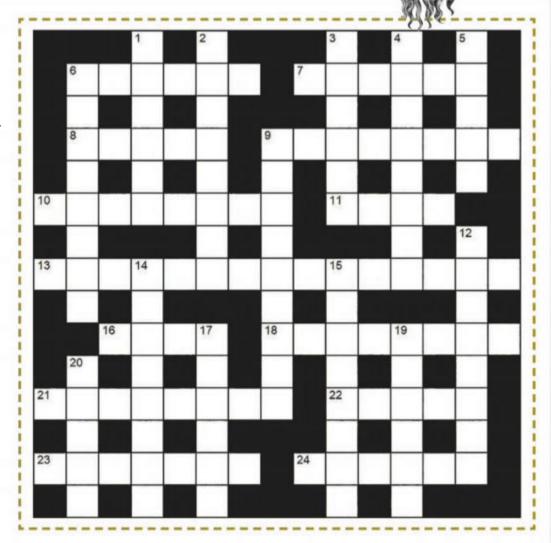


Across

- 6 See 24 across
- **7** Zheng He, the 14th/15th-century Chinese admiral and diplomat was a court ____ (6)
- **8** British naval officer who, after being set adrift by mutinous members of his crew, navigated 4,000 miles to safety (5)
- **9** Sir Francis _____, historian born in 1788 whose son published the influential *Golden Treasury of English Songs and Lyrics* in 1861 (8)
- **10** Portuguese explorer who died before one remaining ship from his fleet completed the first voyage round the world in 1519-22 (8)
- 11 A nihilistic, anti-bourgeois art movement, originating in Zurich, in reaction to the First World War (4)
- **13** Draughtsman of the Declaration of Independence, who nevertheless has been criticised as a slave-owner with racist views (6,9)
- **16** Ancient kingdom, also called Susiana after its capital Susa, in present-day Iran (4)
- **18** A worldwide dance craze from the US, popularised by Chubby Checker in the early 1960s (3,5)
- **21** A label applied to a follower of Jacques-Pierre Brissot during the French Revolution (8)
- **22** Publius Servilius ___ Longus, popularly thought to be the first of the assassins to stab Julius Caesar (5)
- **23** The Scottish bacteriologist credited with the discovery of penicillin (7)
- **24/6 across** Meeting in July 1955 between the US, USSR, France and Britain, as a first step towards easing Cold War tensions (6,6)

Down

- **1** ____ line, a Neoclassical fashion, especially in women's high-waisted dresses, from France (6)
- **2** ____ I, who has been called "the emperor who froze Russia for 30 years" (8)
- **3** Renowned Greek mathematician and teacher of geometry, who lived in around 300 BC (6)
- **4** Her work with displaced people in the Second World War led to the formation of a charity named after her, supporting people with



long-term conditions (3,5)

- **5** One of the three great deities of Hinduism (along with Brahma and Vishnu) (5)
- **6** One of the "three cities of Tripolitania" (with Leptis Magna and Oea) (8)
- **9** Founder of a national detective agency in US, who thwarted an assassination attempt on Lincoln (9)
- **12** One of the African 'Frontline States' under its first president, Sir Seretse Khama (8)
- **14** Influential US African-American leader who controversially said that the Kennedy assassination was an example of "chickens coming home to roost" (7,1)
- **15** Surname that derives from the term for a maker of arrows (8)
- 17 The Muslim calendar dates from 622, that is, the year that Muhammad and his followers arrived at this city (modern name) on

What was an arrow-maker called? (see 15 down)

their flight from Mecca (6)

- **19** The name of this historic Saxon kingdom was used by Thomas Hardy to represent the fictional region in which he set his stories (6)
- **20** Francisco ('Pancho'), an important Mexican revolutionary leader of the early 20th century (5)

Compiled by **Eddie James**

Women: Our History

with a foreword by Lucy Worsley

Discover more about the extraordinary women who changed history in this new book. From explorers and artists to pirates and pioneers, *Women:* Our History brings together the stories of game-changers and rule-breakers who shaped the world we live in. It tells the story of our global history from a female perspective, with a foreword by popular historian and broadcaster Lucy Worsley.

HOW TO ENTER Open to residents of the UK (inc Channel Islands). Post entries to BBC History Magazine, March 2019 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA or email them to march2019@historycomps.co.uk by 5pm on 20 March 2019. Entrants must supply full name address and phone number. The winners will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. Winners' names will appear in the May 2019 issue. By entering, participants agree to be bound by the terms and conditions shown in full in the box below. Immediate Media Company (publishers of BBC History Magazine) will use personal details in accordance with the Immediate Privacy Policy at immediatemedia.co.uk/ privacy-policy/privacy/

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SOLUTION TO OUR JANUARY 2019 CROSSWORD

Across: 7 Axis 8 Aldershot 9 Lee-Enfield 11 Ezra 12 Menhir 13 Daladier 15 Attwood 16 Amorite 20 Corinth 22 Ruins 23 Czar 25 Walsingham 26 Solferino 27 Fort

Down: 1 Casement 2 Eisenhower 3 Allende 4 Mendel 5 Aske 6 Monroe 10 Fargo 14 Darlington 17 Mercia 18 Test Acts 19 Chelmno 20 Cuzco 21 Newark 24 Raft **FIVE WINNERS OF THE SILK ROADS BY PETER FRANKOPAN**

S Mugaseth, Nottinghamshire; C Hill, Hertfordshire; D Archer, Cheshire; JH Sutton, London; J Harrison, Swansea

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"If you look at Hitchens' paintings, they are the colour of southern England in summer and autumn.
As far as I'm concerned he's up there with the greats like Turner and Constable"

Chris Packham, naturalist and television presenter, chooses

Ivon Hitchens

1893-1979

von Hitchens was a British painter best known for his panoramic landscapes created from blocks of colour. He started exhibiting in the 1920s and became part of the London Group of artists in the 1930s. During the Blitz, he was forced to move to Petworth, Sussex, where he spent the rest of his life.

When did you first hear about Ivon Hitchens?

My mother would take me to Southampton Art Gallery and there is a painting there by the artist Paul Nash. It was that which, in my late teens, led me to discover Ivon Hitchens. The two of them were friends and hung out together and, while there are parallels, their work is different: one is known for his war paintings and the other [Hitchens] for his visually striking but unorthodox landscapes.

What kind of person was he?

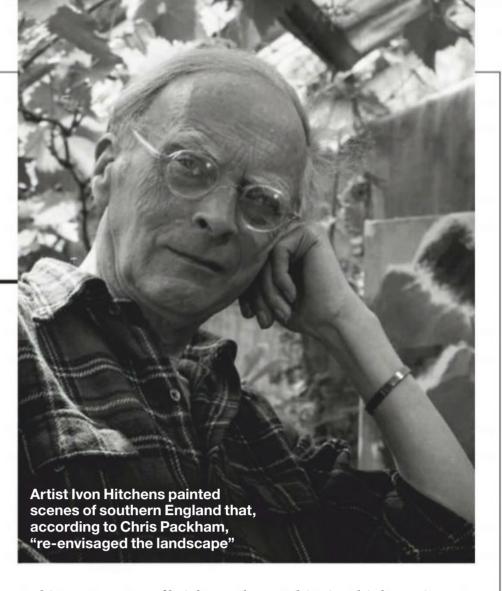
Although severe appendicitis made him unfit for active service, living through two world wars would have been traumatic for anybody. After being bombed out of his studio in Hampstead, London, during the Second World War, he moved to a caravan in woodland near Petworth in Sussex. Here he fell in love with his new rural home. Yes, he would have heard the Luftwaffe flying overhead en route to London but it was otherwise a very peaceful place, as it still is today.

What made Hitchens a hero?

What I admire about him is the ability he had to picture the British countryside in such a different light, and to visualise things which most people can't see. He reinterprets the landscape and opens our eyes to a different way of seeing it – and as a naturalist I find that tremendously exciting.

What was his finest hour?

He had many. His 1940s/50s paintings were slightly more figurative and you can identify structures in the landscape quite easily. But Hitchens then underwent a transformation and his work became a lot more abstract – big, bold brush strokes and blocks of colour. By the 1960s/70s, the world was, generally speaking, a more optimistic place and he reimagined his earlier landscapes,



making greater use of brighter colours. This gives his later pictures a very different feel. I like both periods. I find earlier works such as the 'Winter Walk' series inviting and warm, and can relate to them; but I'm also excited by his almost psychedelic-like later work.

Is there anything you don't particularly admire about him?

He was a member of the London Group of Artists, who were founded in 1913 to challenge the conservatism and domination of the Royal Academy [of Arts]. I'm always a bit suspicious about people forming cliques – I'm not a club man – and find it a bit odd that he joined such an organisation.

Can you see any parallels between his life and your own?

I suppose that like him I'm always looking at the environment and countryside around me for something new. He was looking for colour and form, I'm trying to figure out how it works.

Do you think he deserves to be better known?

Definitely. There have been retrospectives of his work but I would hazard a guess that most people have never heard of him. It's such a shame because if you look at his paintings they are the colour of southern England in summer and autumn. As far as I'm concerned, he's up there with the greats like Turner and Constable.

If you could meet Hitchens what would you ask him?

I wouldn't ask him a thing. I'd just be happy standing behind him. He worked in the field rather than the studio. I'd look over his shoulder and watch as he re-envisaged the landscape.

Chris Packham was talking to York Membery

Chris Packham is a naturalist and TV presenter best known for presenting the BBC nature show *Springwatch* and its spin-offs. His memoir, *Fingers in the Sparkle Jar*, is out now. He tweets @ChrisGPackham

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IVING IN THE RENAISSANCE



WHY TUSCANY?

Apart from being the cradle of the Renaissance, Tuscany boasts an impressive seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Few other European destinations so perfectly blend rich history with great weather and legendary hospitality.

Arguably the region's greatest treasure is the endlessly picturesque city of Florence. If you're looking for somewhere to start, go and see the city's most prominent landmark – the Duomo. The cathedral's stunning dome and façade dominate the skyline, while inside you can see a breathtaking array of stained-glass windows. Other highlights include the world's greatest collection of Renaissance art at the Uffizi gallery.

More historical gems await in Pisa. A picture in front of its iconic leaning tower is obligatory, but its surrounding religious architecture is just as striking, particularly the Battistero and Duomo. And if you still haven't had your fill of astonishing cathedrals and open town squares, the city of Siena is another destination not to be missed.

You can sample the beautiful countryside in the UNESCO World Heritage site of Val d'Orcia, with its sweeping valley views, while the nearby town of Pienza is also UNESCO-recognised. Crown it all off with a visit to the Medici Villas and Gardens, where you can walk through the striking Renaissance palace's art exhibitions, as well as its bucolic surrounding gardens.

WHY NOVASOL?

There's no better way to access all the cultural and natural riches that Tuscany has to offer than with a holiday home by NOVASOL, who have more than 1,400 across the region and over 5,500 across Italy. Not only does self-catering allow you to visit all these destinations at your own pace, but you can make yourself truly at home in a way that you can't with a hotel. Wherever in Tuscany your NOVASOL holiday home is, you'll have complete freedom to immerse yourself in the local culture. Take a look at three exceptional-quality, reasonably priced options to make your Tuscan home from home.



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This charming farm comprises converted buildings, including a 15th-century lookout tower and a small church from the 18th century. All the buildings have been lovingly restored and beautifully furnished. It sits on a hill just 3km from the town of Poggibonsi, only 25km from Siena. It sleeps up to eight guests across three bedrooms.



Search: ITN177

MONTAIONE

The Podere Moricci holiday complex has apartments for up to four guests and boasts spacious outdoor areas, including expansive gardens, an enticing L-shaped swimming pool and striking views of the surrounding countryside. Each apartment comes with satellite TV, while extras can include dinners brought to your apartment.



Search: ITS438

RAPOLANO TERME

For the ultimate quiet country retreat, this gorgeous four-bedroom country house is perfect. There are panoramic views of rolling hills, woodland and two castles in the distance. The verdant garden is topped off by an infinity pool, and if that's not enough relaxation, the spas and thermal baths of Rapolano are only 8km away.





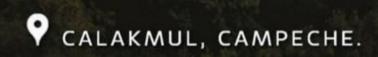
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At this time of year I'm sure many of you will be thinking about travel plans for the months to come. In case you're in need of ideas, we've teamed up with Lonely Planet's editorial director, Tom Hall, to select some of this year's star history destinations.

Many of his picks are particularly appropriate for 2019, from the European Capital of Culture Plovdiv, to Normandy for the 75th anniversary of D-Day, and Florence, 500 years after the death of Leonardo da Vinci. Others are just superb heritage destinations, as anyone who has visited Morocco, Vietnam or Denmark will surely attest.

I hope you find something to inspire you here and that, if nothing else, it provides a welcome break from the winter chill!

Rob Attar

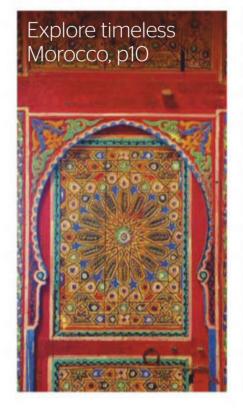
Editor

COVER IMAGE SHOWS: Early morning shot of Copenhagen's 400-year-old Rosenborg Castle, Christian IV's favourite residence

2019 Historical Travel Guide is a free supplement presented within the March 2019 issue of *BBC History Magazine* which is published by Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited under licence from BBC Worldwide.

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PILOWDINE

harming, historic and yet still semisecret, Plovdiv is a treat for travellers who think they've seen everything in Europe. Perhaps better known by its former name of **Philippopolis**, Bulgaria's second city celebrates connections to Philip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, and a long roll-call of invaders including Persians, Romans and crusaders. All have passed through here while crossing the Thracian plain, one of the great highways of history linking Europe to the east, the Middle East and Asia beyond.

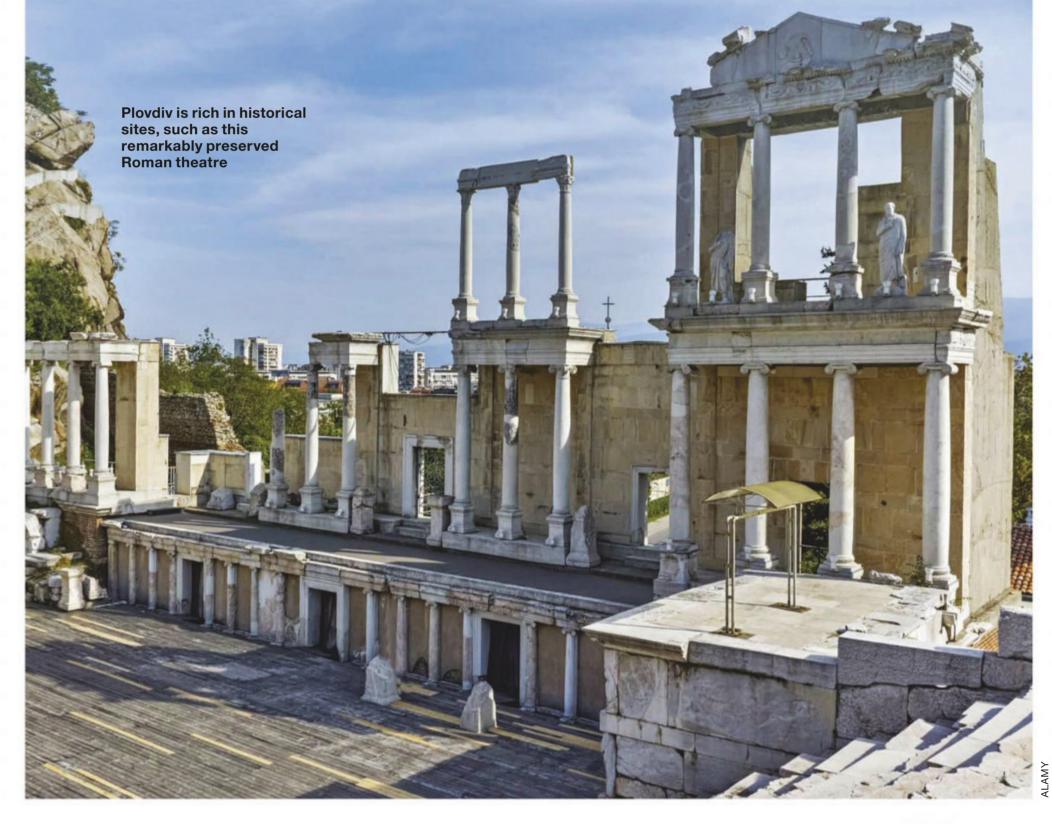
Plovdiv is European Capital of Culture for 2019. As well as the many events marking

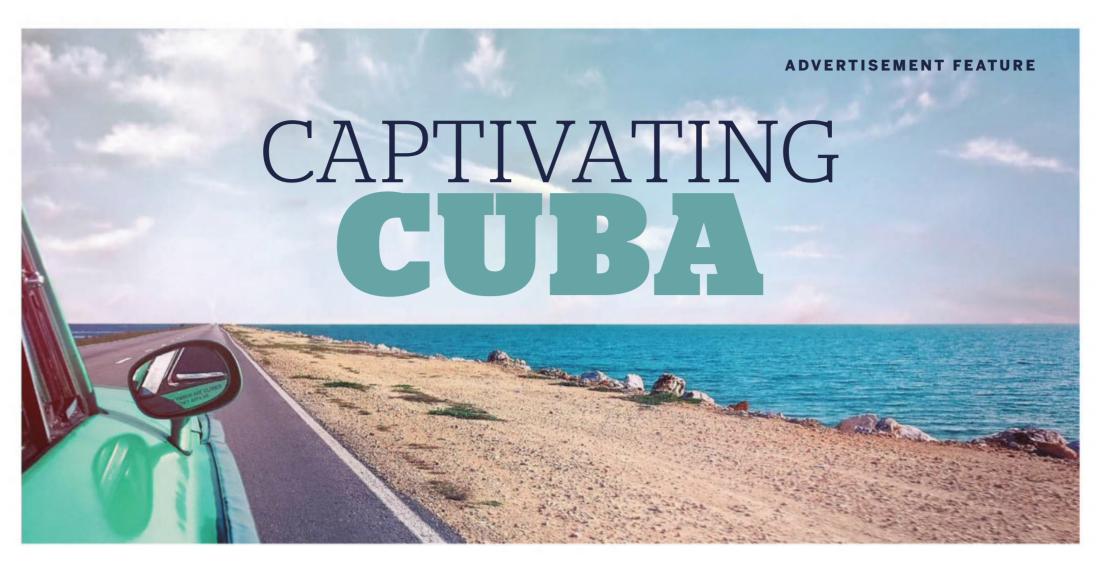
this, visitors can explore one of eastern Europe's loveliest old towns, with colourful houses set on cobblestone streets snaking around the hills the town was built on. Attractions include a fine Roman theatre and other archaeological sites, plus the **Regional Ethnographic Museum** in a beautiful 19th-century merchant's house. The city is particularly pleasant in summer, when street and garden cafes take advantage of warm weather. Around Plovdiv are leftover monuments from the Soviet era, and a 20 mile drive south are the fine frescoes of **Bachkovo Monastery**, a religious site in picturesque countryside.

Plovdiv is reached by direct low-cost flights from the UK, or easily combined with a longer exploration of Bulgaria by flying into Sofia or Burgas on the Black Sea coast.

IF YOULIKE THIS...

- Try Lviv, Ukraine for beautiful baroque churches mingling with bombastic Soviet-era structures and trams rattling along cobbled streets.
- All of Romania is underrated, but try the medieval towns of Braşov, Sighişoara and Sibiu and Transylvania's Saxon villages for starters.





Colourful, chaotic and completely charming, discover the country that stole Hemingway's heart

uba is a country where past meets present in the most surprising way.

Brimming with more than 500 years of history, it's a fascinating melting pot of baroque cathedrals, Spanish colonial architecture, art-deco splendour and modernday spirit. When Hemingway first visited in 1928, he found it such a source of inspiration he made it his home for the next 30 years.

If you're tempted to visit, you don't have to stay as long as Hemingway. Travel with Jules Verne and its expert tour guides and you can experience the Best of Cuba in eight days, or Hemingway's Cuba in 15.

The Best of Cuba tour takes in the UNESCO World Heritage sites of Havana and Trinidad, often referred to as a 'living museum', before giving you a couple of days to relax on the beautiful island of Cayo Santa Maria. Opt for the Hemingway tour, and you'll visit some of his old haunts in Havana and Trinidad, as well as taking in Santa Clara, famed for its links to Che Guevara, and the stunning beach resort town of Varadero.

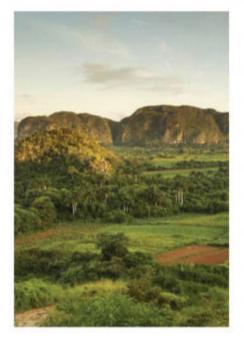
Quench your thirst for adventure with Jules Verne and uncover the real character of the places you visit. Since 1978, it's been taking small groups to both nearby and far-flung destinations, accompanied by guides who can show you the world as it really is. With expert organisation, meals included and no single supplement, you'll be hard-pressed to think of a reason not to go.



















Towhere so close to home offers such a taste of the exotic as Morocco. This scenic combination of Africa and the Middle East is best known for Marrakesh's timeless **Jemaa el-Fnaa square** and the clamour of **Fez**'s medina. However, Morocco's heritage runs far deeper than this. **Meknes** is emerging as an excellent alternative to other big-name cities, with striking imperial architecture in close proximity to the Roman ruins of **Volubilis**. And then there's **Tangier**, for millennia a gateway to the Mediterranean and first taste of Africa, and more recently a haunt of writers and artists basking in a colourful, raffish atmosphere.

Should the hustle and bustle of Morocco's cities become too intense, rural areas offer another dimension. South of Marrakesh the valleys of the **Atlas mountains** hide ancient villages and preserved caravanserai. In the Rif mountains, **Chefchaouen** is a laid-back old town painted an otherworldly blue. The far south has the Saharan dunes of your dreams, while on the coast **Essaouira**'s unique location and windswept ambience makes for a magical retreat.

If the history and architecture hasn't convinced you, Morocco's food scene has never been better – with modern takes on the spice-laden specialities forged from

waves of influences, including Berber, Arab and French colonial. Getting to Morocco is a breeze, with affordable flights connecting the UK with key cities. The country also has an efficient rail and bus network.

IF YOULIKE THIS...

- Andalucia's Moorish influences have much in common with its near neighbour.
- Lebanon's mix of Europe and the Middle East and great food is a fantastic combination, with the added bonus of top-class beaches and winter sports.

ADANISH ADVENTURE

A self-catered NOVASOL holiday in Denmark lets you discover the country's fascinating history at your own pace

rom the Vikings to WWII, Denmark is the perfect destination for a historical getaway. NOVASOL has more than 10,000 holiday homes across Denmark, so wherever you choose to stay, the country's small size and excellent transport network allow you to pack a lot in at your own pace. Why not start with the Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde? It offers a real insight into the Viking way of life, and its centrepiece is five stunningly preserved Viking ships excavated in 1962. Another Viking highlight is the Ladby Viking Museum, which showcases a stirring ship burial site.

Just north of Copenhagen, you can visit the Baroque vision that is Frederiksborg Castle and its immaculate adjoining gardens. You can also visit 16th-century Kronborg Castle, known as the setting for William Shakespeare's Hamlet. Copenhagen itself is ripe for discovery, from the beautiful Tivoli gardens to the quayside of the Nyhavn Canal, as well as the non-conformist haven of Christiania.

Wherever in Denmark you've got your heart set on, make your base a NOVASOL holiday home. You can head out on historical adventures, local countryside and restaurants whenever you want, at your own pace, with a cosy, private home to come back to. With a range of tastefully decorated and furnished properties available at great prices, you've got total freedom to explore this wonderfully vibrant country. Take a look at two of NOVASOL's Danish properties.



Search: E17661

RØRVIG

This light, spacious, five-bedroom holiday home boasts extraordinary views of the surrounding fjords, and makes a great property for those looking to truly unwind. Rørvig is just over an hour's drive from Copenhagen, with picturesque countryside landscapes and a quiet, peaceful atmosphere.

HANDRUP STRAND

Search: D15015

This charming beachside house sleeps up to six and has unbeatable panoramic views over the bay of Ebeltoft, Mols and Samsø. Recently renovated, the old cottage beautifully combines authenticity with modern facilities. This spot is perfect for tranquil walks and bike rides along the coast.





If you need an excuse to visit the timeless and beautiful city of Florence, 2019 offers a notable anniversary. It is 500 years since the death of painter, inventor, writer and all-round polymath Leonardo da Vinci. Florence's key role in the flourishing of the arts and learning during the Renaissance makes it the pick of potential Da Vinci destinations in Italy. The city that surrounded and inspired him is still very much in evidence.

Florence's celebrated **Uffizi Gallery** has four of his early Florentine paintings on display, including the recently restored – but still unfinished – **Adoration of the Magi**.

Da Vinci has become almost as celebrated for his inventions as his paintings, and two museums in Florence celebrate this side of his work. At the **Leonardo da Vinci Museum** and the nearby **Museo Leonardo da Vinci**, hundreds of his models, from a robot to flying machines, have been brought to life. More mysteriously, within the Palazzo Vecchio's **Salone dei Cinquecento**, there might just be a lost masterpiece by Da Vinci covered by a later fresco.

Of course, Milan and Venice, where his **Last Supper** and **Vitruvian Man** can respectively be found, are also good spots

for Leonardo buffs. Plus, in 2019, many of the Royal Collection of 550 Da Vinci drawings will be on display at cities around the UK.

IF YOULIKE THIS...

- Bologna is less celebrated but has some wonderful medieval buildings, Europe's oldest university and far fewer crowds than comparable cities.
- Da Vinci spent his final years in Amboise in the Loire Valley, France.
 The Château du Clos Lucé, where he died, is today a museum devoted to his life and work.



GO WEST

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ny trip to Western Australia should start in its sun drenched capital city, Perth. Now the closest gateway city in Australia with non stop Qantas flights from London, Perth offers vibrant city life surrounded by nature. Nestled between the Swan River and one of the world's largest urban parks, Perth's energetic city centre is home to a world class cultural, dining and events scene. New developments are happening all the time, including a raft of affordable quality hotels, top restaurants, eclectic bars and cosmopolitan cultural and public spaces. You can also enjoy an award winning wine region, pristine bushland or an ocean sunset within just 30 minutes or less of the central business district.

MARGARET RIVER REGION

Outside of Perth, Western Australia has a wealth of experiences waiting. Head three hours south to the Margaret River region, home to more than 200 wineries offering tastings and lunches with spectacular views. The region also has whisky and gin distilleries and a growing number of craft beer breweries. Aside from its food and wine offerings, the South West region is also a base for outdoor adventures like surfing, snorkelling, whale watching, mountain biking, hiking, caving, shipwreck diving and tree-top walking.



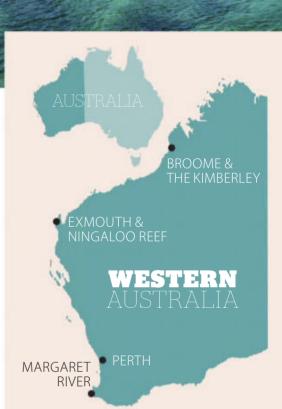
Or, head north from Perth for a scenic roadtrip along the Indian Ocean Drive to Ningaloo Reef, the world's largest fringing reef. Here there is a myriad of marine life to snorkel with, and if you're really feeling adventurous, you can swim with the ultimate gentle giant - the whale shark. In fact, it's the only place on the planet where you can experience the 'Big Three' at the same time - whale sharks, humpback whales and giant manta rays.



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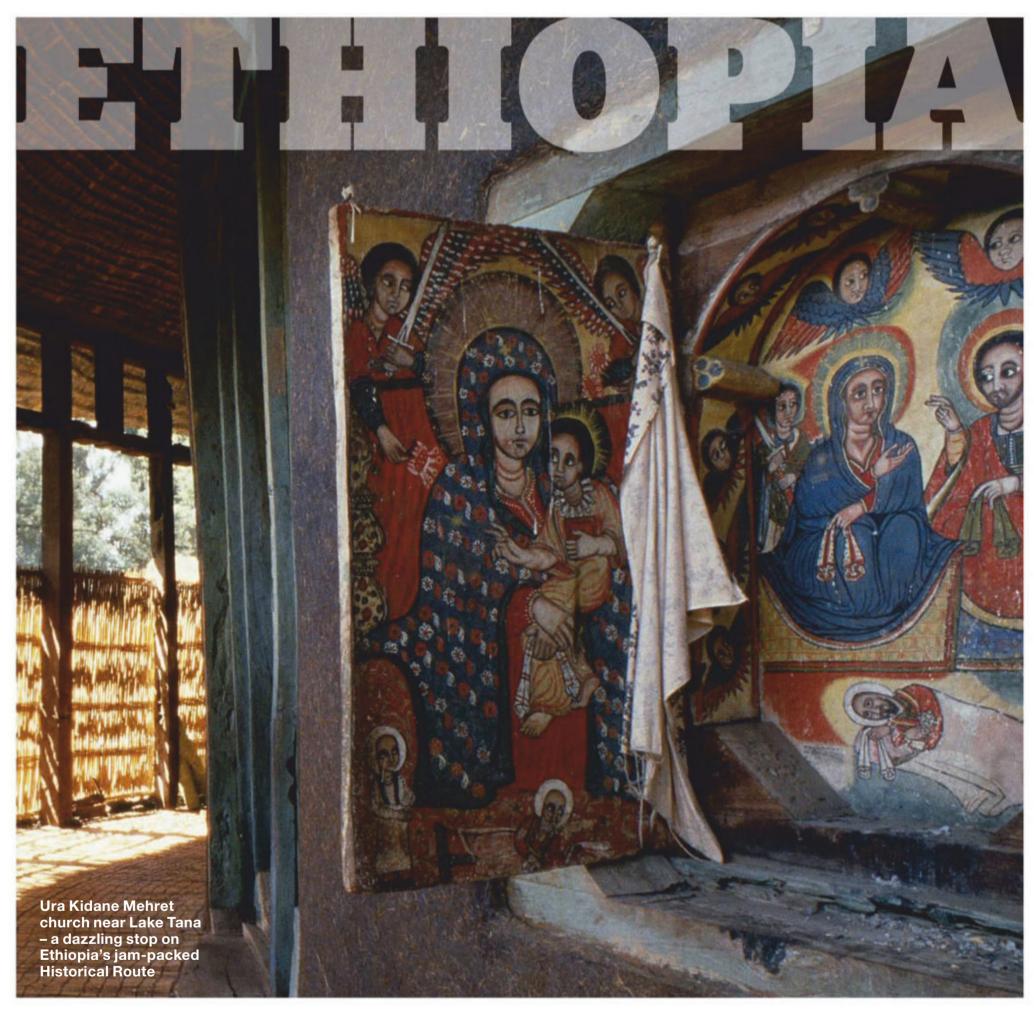


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thiopia is a simply mind-boggling historical destination. Whichever way you point yourself out of **Addis Ababa** there's evidence of ancient culture and religion in an easy-to-explore, safe and affordable package.

Many of Ethiopia's finest attractions can be seen by following the Historic Route through the north of the country. **Bahir Dar**, from which the **Blue Nile Falls** and **Lake Tana**'s timeless monasteries are accessible, and **Gonder**, with its incongruous royal castle, are the usual first two stops flying north from the capital. A hop on from here is **Lalibela**, which although known for its astonishing rock-hewn churches, must be

the world's most overlooked great wonder. A day's hiking to more remote churches is one of the great historical adventures anywhere in Africa. The last stop on the route is **Axum**, home to an ancient empire and the **Lost Ark of the Covenant**. Convenient flights link this itinerary.

But it's venturing off this route that really reveals the depth of Ethiopia's attractions. There are remote churches and monasteries in **Tigray** to track down. In the east, the holy city of **Harar** was a refuge or prison for the poet Arthur Rimbaud, and today its ancient walls contain dozens of mosques and tiny lanes to wander. In the south and elsewhere there are national parks offering wildlife

encounters including the chance to see the endemic simien wolf.

You'll probably pass through Addis Ababa more than once. Ethiopia's lively capital has a host of fascinating museums to put everything in context.

IF YOULIKE THIS ...

- The lesser-known emirate of Ras al Khaimah has a traditional desert culture that's slowly opening to the world just a short journey from Dubai.
- Egypt's ancient wonders and Christian heritage make for an interesting comparison down the river Nile.



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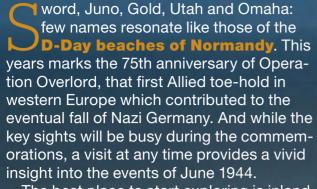
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The best place to start exploring is inland, in **Caen**. Here the **Memorial Museum** recounts Europe's spiral into conflict and the subsequent invasion of France, as well as the operation to liberate the country. From there, the beaches, landmarks and memorials to the battle are within easy reach, best accessed with your own car or on an organised tour. You can see them all in a long day. Two would be preferable, however, as there's a lot to stop off and see, including several excellent museums and the striking cemeteries to be found at various points along the route.

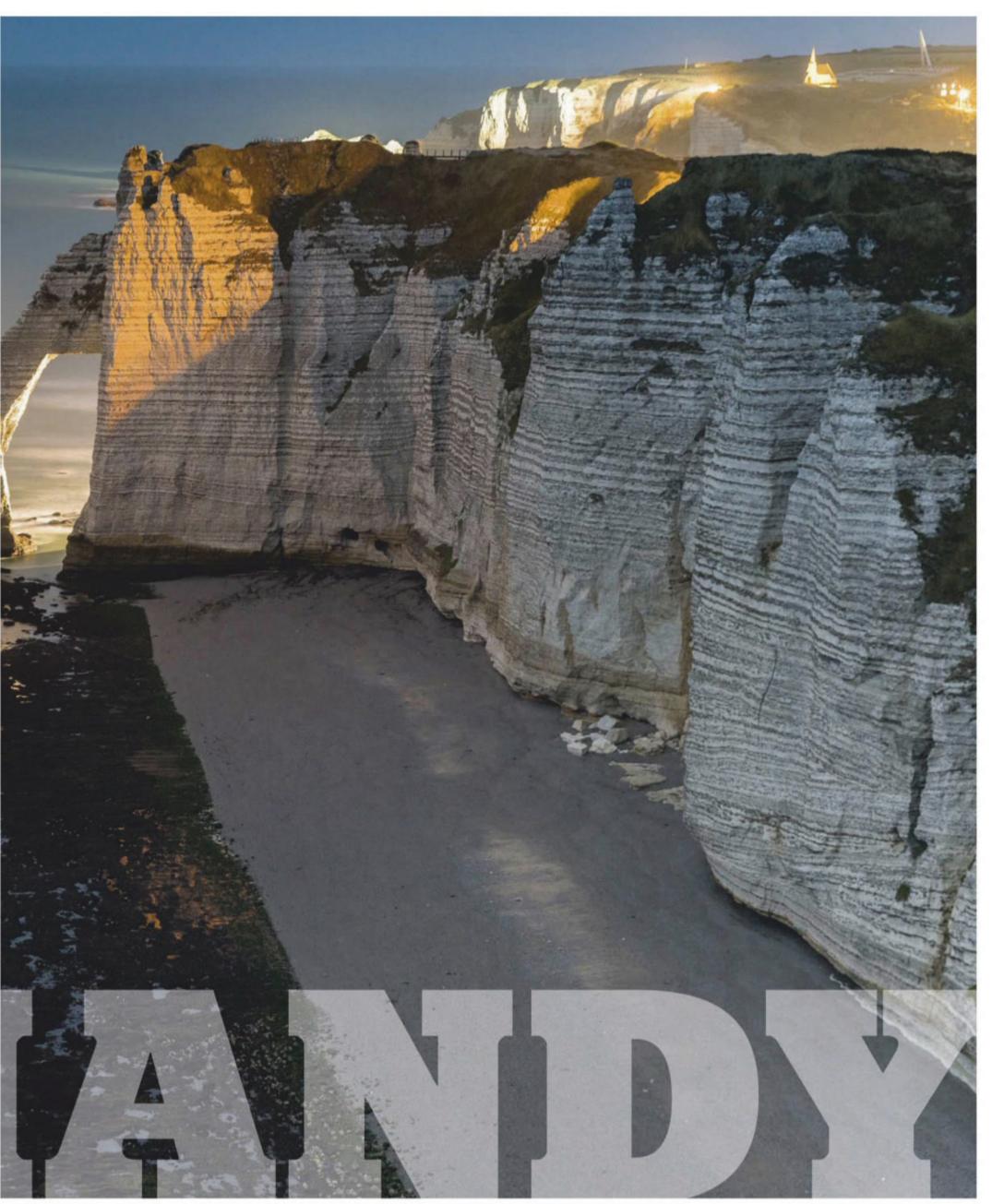
Of course, this being Normandy, there

are centuries of history to explore, and a connection with another famous invasion that went in the opposite direction. The D-Day beaches can easily be tied in with a visit to the **Bayeux Tapestry** in the lovely cathedral town of the same name. William the Conqueror's tomb, along with that of his wife, is close by in Caen, which is also home to a dramatic castle. For a change of era, the beautiful fishing port of **Honfleur**, much beloved of weekending Parisians, is stuffed full of half-timbered medieval houses and is also home to a remarkable wooden church.

IF YOULIKE THIS...

- The Ardennes in **Belgium**, the setting for the battle of the Bulge, is another fascinating Second World War theatre.
- A second French region with enormous amounts of history is Alsace-Lorraine, home to the cities of Strasbourg, Nancy and Metz, with wineries dotting the countryside.

Sunset at the chalk cliffs of Étretat. Normandy is beloved of weekending Parisians and D-Day enthusiasts alike





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HAVANA, CUBA

iven the pace of change in Havana, it's probably no surprise that the city is trumpeting a series of new hotel openings to coincide with its 500th anniversary. But while development in the city can seem frantic, Cuba's capital retains the beauty, grit, music and energy that has long made it such a compelling corner of the world to explore. Anywhere reaching the quincentenary of its founding by Spanish colonisers has, by definition, seen a vast amount of history, so a visit in 2019 is a great excuse to look back as well as forward.

Finding Havana's top sights is easy enough. Start in the **Plaza Vieja**, tour the

Cristóbal Colón, and hit the museums dedicated to the revolution and celebrated resident Ernest Hemingway. The real joy of being here, though, is strolling the rundown streets and along the seafront Malecón, taking in the sights and sounds of Havana life. Neighbourhoods such as Guanabacoa and Playa will take you away from the bigger crowds touring Habana Vieja.

Havana is generally seen as part of a longer visit to Cuba, whether keeping to the beaches to the north of the city or taking the chance to visit other colonial treasures like **Camagüey** and **Trinidad**. The cost of

flying here has come down with the increase in flights, particularly from the US. It is increasingly feasible to tack a few days in Cuba onto a US visit, especially if you're heading to Florida: Miami is just a 75-minute hop away.

IF YOULIKE THIS...

- Jamaica offers a very close yet very different take on the Caribbean.
- Miami is another Latin-influenced city alive with music. The heritage here is gloriously rooted in the city's art-deco architecture.



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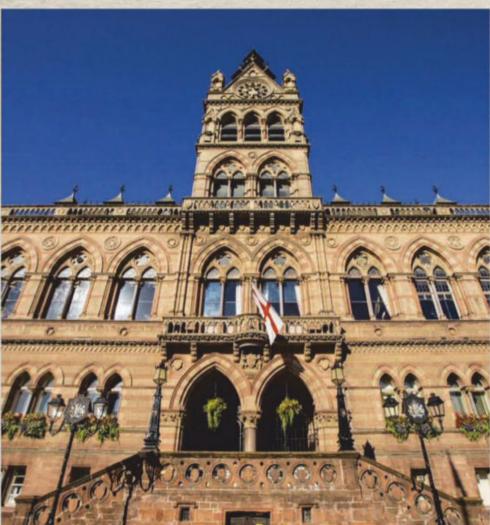
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The state of the state of

he epic sweep of Danish history makes for a compelling reason to visit. This land of Vikings and bog-bodies, of mighty castles and pretty fishing villages is full of interest. Denmark is easy to get around by public transport, and there are excellent places to stay almost everywhere. Outside the June and July peak, it can be surprisingly affordable.

There's a vast amount to see in **Copenhagen**, including the city's iconic **Tivoli Gardens**, the Renaissance-era **Rosenborg Castle** and fabulous art museums. The city continues to innovate, with recent openings such as the post-industrial food and craft market **Reffen** on Refshaleøen island and the waste-to-

energy management facility of **Amager Bakke**, which now boasts a ski slope and hiking trails on its roof.

Venturing beyond the capital is immensely rewarding. The small towns and cities of **Jutland** are perhaps the richest historic Danish attractions. In the south, **Ribe**'s timeless old town and **Koldinghus Castle** are must-sees.

The dynamic city of **Aarhus** offers good transport links to the wild west coast, as well as excellent museums and food options. The Grauballe Man is as well preserved as Europe's bog-dwellers come and can be found in a museum just outside Aarhus.

On the northern tip of Jutland, where Europe's landmass seems to exhale and run

out into the sea, the lovely fishing town of **Skagen** is as enchanting today as in the 19th century, when it was discovered by artists such as Holger Drachmann and PS Krøyer. Their work is displayed in Skagen's excellent museum.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

- More Nordic history in a beautiful and relaxed setting can be found on historic Gotland, just off mainland Sweden.
- Oslo's museums offer a wide range of historical treasures, including a Viking longboat and the Kon-Tiki raft used by explorer Thor Heyerdahl to cross the Pacific Ocean.

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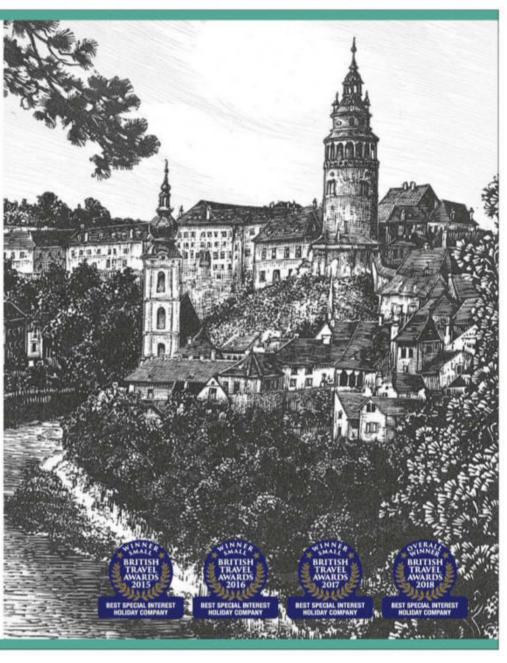
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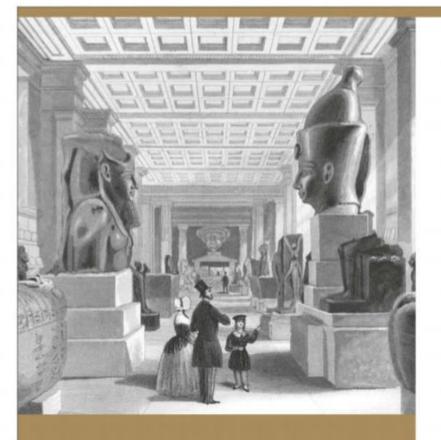
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ECUADOR

hatever you may be looking for in South America, you can find it in Ecuador. Well-preserved colonial town centres? Cuenca and the capital **Quito** are just two of many places that fit the bill. Fancy the high Andes? Here's volcano Cotopaxi, almost 6,000m high, with historic hacienda accommodation as a base. There are dozens of other trekking options to get into the big mountains, many within easy reach of Quito. For a taste of the Amazon, the country's huge rainforest region, including the Yasumí National Park, is a largely unspoilt stretch of jungle to rival anywhere on Earth. In the north of the country, the cloud forest around **Mindo** is one of the world's foremost destinations for birdwatching, and also a great place to investigate the area's famed chocolate industry.

Then, of course, there are the **Galápa-gos Islands**. Famed for its wildlife, this archipelago that so inspired Darwin is like nowhere else on Earth and a true once-in-a-lifetime destination. You'll almost certainly pass through **Guayaquil**, Ecuador's second city, on the way to or from the islands. The city's reborn riverside and colonial district make it more than a transit point. Two other things that can be elusive in South America – beaches and trains – can also be enjoyed here. Ecuador's

north-west coast has some fine stretches of sand for surfers and seafood fans. The country's railway network is oriented mostly towards tourist services, and after taking one of the scenic services you'll understand why.

IF YOULIKE THIS ...

- Neighbouring Peru has a similar mix of attractions on a larger scale, with the additional big-hitter of Machu Picchu.
- Ecotourism, volcanoes and colonial influences can also be found in the fast-emerging destination of Nicaragua.

Quilotoa, a water-filled volcanic crater in the Andes – just one of many varied natural sights in Ecuador







Tumerous locations in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) offer reminders of the events of 30 years ago that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall and, eventually, German reunification. While Berlin will understandably get the lion's share of attention, the beautiful city of Leipzig can claim to be the cradle of the peaceful demonstrations and mass movement of people that swept the country and much of Europe.

St Nicholas Church was the base for the Monday demonstrations, a series of protests against the communist regime.

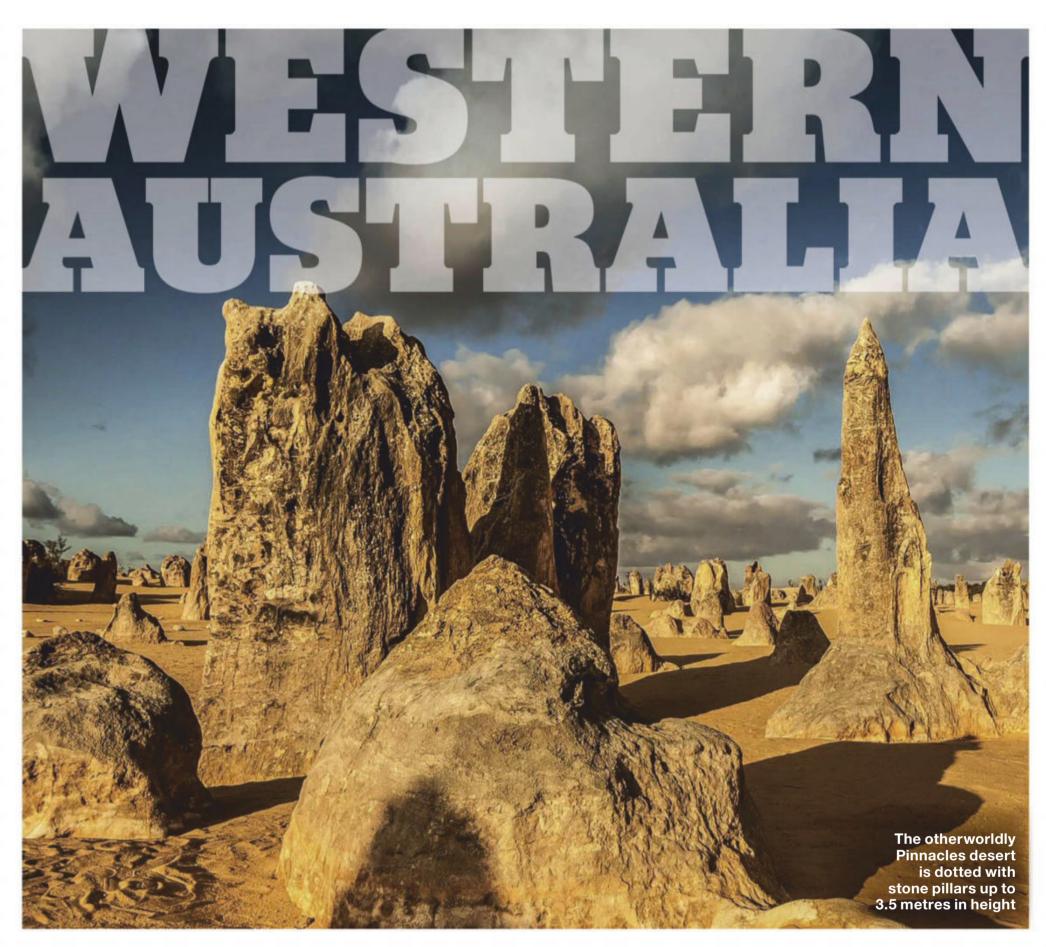
As they intensified, word reached other parts of the country, triggering further protests. The prayers that prefaced the demonstrations are still held each Monday at 5pm.

Leipzig today is comfortable in the role of progressive city, while also still showing off the charms that saw **Goethe** term it "a little Paris". Its historic shopping arcades, **Bach** heritage and pair of fascinating museums telling the history of the GDR (**Zeitgeschichtliches Forum**) and its secret police (**Stasi Museum**) – the latter located at their former HQ – are well worth seeing. Berlin, **Dresden** and the remarkable

landscape of **Saxon Switzerland** are within easy reach, making Leipzig a great base for further exploration.

IF YOULIKE THIS ...

- Music, history and beauty also combine in Salzburg, Austria, which has a fairytale castle and old town, with Mozart and The Sound of Music as a soundtrack.
- A story of Hanseatic trading, some of classical music's biggest names and postwar revival awaits in Hamburg, Germany's second-largest city.



he Qantas route from London to **Perth**, introduced in March 2018, puts Western Australia just one flight away from the UK. And while this mammoth region is not the cradle of Australia's modern history, it is a fascinating place to explore. This is a landscape that has been shaped by indigenous life going back millennia, and more recently by waves of colonial activity and gold-rush development.

You'll arrive in **Perth**, the laid-back capital of the west and a good starting point for exploring the region. At the **Art Gallery of Western Australia** you can dive into the region's Indigenous art scene; it also has a rightly celebrated collection of historical paintings. The city's port, **Fremantle**, has a well-preserved historic heart populated with bohemian cafes and small independent shops. At the **WA Shipwrecks Museum**

you can learn about the colourful history of the *Batavia*, a Dutch merchant ship wrecked off the coast in 1629.

The south-west of Western Australia is a beautiful, green region, home to wineries and a lively microbrew scene, with forests and rural roads perfect for driving. Once you've toured between **Bunbury** and the towns of **Margaret River** and **Denmark**, via the mighty **Valley of the Giants** with its tree-top walk, aim for **Albany**. It's the state's earliest European settlement and a great base for exploring the south coast to celebrated spots such as **Esperance** on Great Ocean Drive, a 25-mile circular loop.

You've probably come for dramatic landscapes and a wild, remote take on Australia. For that, aim north, travelling from Perth to **Exmouth**, or even as far as **Broome** (1,400 miles) if you have a few

weeks to spare. Along the way you'll encounter the **Pinnacles desert**, with its weathered stone pillars; the excellent **Western Australia Museum** in Geraldton; and find solitude in the dramatic gorges of **Karijini National Park**. The intrepid can continue across the north on the four-wheel drive, dry-season-only **Gibb River Road**.

IF VOIILIKE THIS

- Enjoy more antipodean delights on New Zealand's **North Island**, including Wellington's marvellous national museum, Te Papa, and the art deco city of Napier, rebuilt in the 1930s after an earthquake.
- Otherworldly desert touring in Damaraland in Namibia, Africa rivals the stunning scenery to be found in the north of Western Australia.

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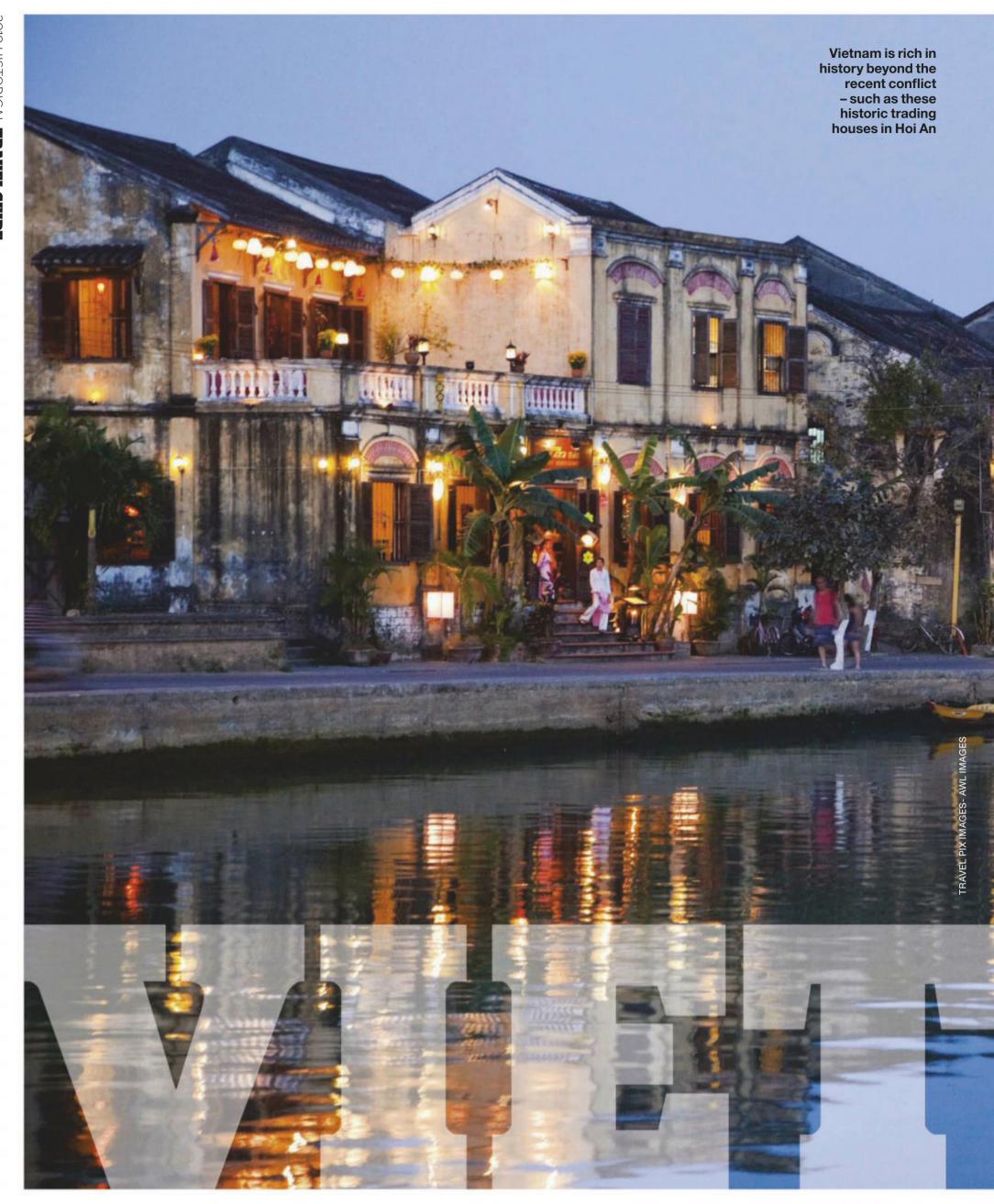
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ver the past few years, Vietnam has risen from relative obscurity to become one of south-east Asia's most popular destinations. This is the region at its most vibrant: a fast-paced, youthful country with a growing economy and an exciting cultural and food scene. It's also more accessible than ever before, especially if you can take advantage of excellent-value connecting flights from regional hubs in China and Singapore.

By all means, plan to come to Vietnam to explore its recent history, in particular the 20-year struggle that made its name around the world. The cities and countryside are

dotted with battlefields, museums and remnants of the Vietnam War, while the country's geography suggests a north-south journey following key moments in the conflict.

There are, however, millennia of history in Vietnam beyond its recent struggles. Visitors find **Hanoi**'s old quarters as fascinating as sights such as PoW prison the **Hanoi Hilton** and **Huu Tiep Lake**, with its wreckage of a downed B-52. As well as visiting the former **Chu Lai air base** and the **Núi Thành memorial**, you should not miss **Hoi An**'s ancient trading houses.

Hue, Vietnam's imperial capital, is an

unmissable stop, as is the French colonial hill station at **Da Lat**. Vietnam's natural wonders are numerous, including fine beaches at **Nha Trang** and **Mui Ne**, and **Ha Long Bay**'s singular limestone islands.

IF YOULIKE THIS...

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